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## THESIS

TURMOIL, TRANSITION...TRiumPH?  
THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

by

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June 1986

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Turmoil, Transition...Triumph?:  
The Democratic Revolution in the Philippines

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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from the

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June 1986

## ABSTRACT

In November of 1985, Ferdinand Marcos, President of the Republic of the Philippines, announced that he would hold a "snap" Presidential election. This election took place on 7 February, 1986, in a highly charged atmosphere of partisan politics marked by intimidation, widespread poll irregularities and intense domestic and foreign scrutiny. The United States' official position remained fluid in an attempt to balance U.S. strategic and economic national interests with those of the Filipino people. The essential Philippine national interest at stake was the viability of the democratic process as an expression of the will of a free people. Following a hotly disputed count the incumbent President Marcos claimed victory, a move similarly taken by his opposition opponent, Mrs. Corazon Aquino. The resulting civil strife threatened peace in the Philippines and posed significant questions for U.S. foreign policy, specifically, the relative priority of democratic values vis a vis strategic interests and the role of the United States in mitigating the rise of a communist insurgency there. This is a case study of the development of that election and the role that the United States did and could have played in it. Additionally, it examines the national interests of both countries as expressed during and after the election.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

A new era in international relations was embarked upon at the end of World War II. Security arrangements that had been based upon pre-existing economic, colonial, and social orders were no longer operative; in their place the United States sought to initiate a series of mutual defense treaties and arrangements that would take advantage of the undisputed leadership of the West, and the strength of the American economy. This transformation was particularly necessary in the Western Pacific because many of the small nations of the region were either newly independent or were in the process of becoming so as a result of the war's end. In that crucial period of time between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Korean War--and the Cold War--one of the nations that became independent was the Republic of the Philippines.

As the only colony that the United States ever had, the Philippines held, and holds, a special place in our national conscience. When independence was declared on July, 4, 1946, the Philippines was envisioned as an Asian success story, steeped in democratic ideal and protected by the might of America. As the world changed, so changed both countries. Despite Philippine nationalism the special relationship that had existed before independence continued, and through successive administrations the United States continued to observe in the Philippines an aspiring student of American-style democracy. Elections were regularly held, and the 1935 Constitution remained in force. Combined Filipino and American action in

the 1950's led to the defeat of the Hukbalahap threat<sup>1</sup>, and once again the road to development appeared substantially clear.

After the untimely death of President Ramon Magsaysay in 1957 in an airplane crash, the electoral process produced presidents of less popularity within policy centers in the United States; nevertheless the government of the Philippines remained essentially stable and decidedly anti-communist. Charges of corruption within the government tainted Presidents' Garcia and Macapagal, and in 1965 a candidate arose that caught not only the imagination of the Philippines, but also of knowledgeable Americans.

He was Senator Ferdinand E. Marcos, and he brought with him his beautiful and disarming wife, Imelda. They were at ease in any social setting, and seemed precisely the breath of fresh and vibrant air that diplomatic circles needed. Both President Johnson and Secretary General Brezhnev fell to Imelda's charms, and as President Marcos spoke of his country's problems and needs he was listened to both within his country and in economic centers around the world. His ardent stand against corruption, the traditional oligarchy, Philippine criminality and communism earned him the widespread support of American legislators and policy-makers.

The deepening American involvement in South Vietnam led to intensification of efforts to avoid the loss of other peripheral Asian nations to communism, and to grateful appreciation of those allies supporting us in the war. The sending of the PHILCAG troops to Vietnam, with then-Major Fidel

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<sup>1</sup>Often used in its abbreviated form, Huk, Hukbalahap is itself an abbreviated form of the Tagalog phrase, Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon, or People's Anti-Japanese Army. After 1946 it became the People's Liberation Army, and took up arms in association with the National Peasant Union, PKM, in revolt against landlord abuses and tenancy problems. Its leader, Luis Taruc, surrendered in May 1954 during the Magsaysay administration, and this marked the end of the movement's power.

Ramos second in command, went a long way in cementing U.S. support of President Marcos. In 1969 the Nixon Doctrine was announced, and in the Philippines Marcos was reelected--the first Filipino president to achieve such status.

During the ensuing two years conditions within the country deteriorated both economically and seemingly spiritually. Criminality increased to alarming proportions and firearms were much in evidence in many strata of society, often openly. In 1971 the writ of habeas corpus was suspended following a bombing at a rally, and on September 21, 1972, martial law was declared by President Marcos. The catalytic incident was an alleged attempt on the life of the Defense Minister, Juan Ponce "Johnny" Enrile. International business had become increasingly wary of the volatile situation in the Philippines; the imposition of martial law was greeted with a sigh of relief. Likewise, within the country many saw the collection of guns and the dismemberment of criminal associations as the first step on the road to normalcy. Surely after life returned to law and order the president would revoke martial law and life would return to it's previous simplicity.

In December of this same year President Marcos instituted the barangay structure<sup>2</sup>, and this added to what became a growing institutionalism of one-man rule. A plebiscite was held for a new form of parliamentary constitution, and the presidential power of decree was

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<sup>2</sup>The barangay, a word taken from the Malay, was instituted by President Marcos as the lowest level of governmental structure, replacing the barrio. It was proposed to enable the "voice of the people" to reach the national government, but instead became a vehicle for the consolidation of political power at the grassroots level. Barangay captains that very often had significant monetary backing from Manila were elected in poor rural areas where a few pesos, or demonstrations of the ability to bring about improvement, were all that was necessary to bring votes.

assumed. Although the early Seventies did see signs of economic growth and restored confidence in the Philippines by investors, the combination of government policies and the world oil crisis hit the country hard after 1973. Nevertheless, United States support for President Marcos and his strong anti-communist stand continued unabated, and in January of 1979, a new package of U.S. economic and military assistance was agreed upon. Though martial law was ended by proclamation on January 17, 1981, opposition to both it and its instigator had become entrenched.

Calls for an end to the regime grew in strength and number, and one of the loudest critics was Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr. After being imprisoned by President Marcos for seven years, he was allowed to travel to the United States for medical treatment. While in exile in the U.S. he continued to speak out against the Marcos regime, and returned to the Philippines in 1983. On August 21st of that year "Ninoy" Aquino was assassinated at the airport upon debarking from his plane. The Aquino assassination, and the murky conditions under which it occurred, brought the collective national displeasure to a head, and swelled the ranks of the opposition.

Following mounting international criticism of his regime, on November 3rd, 1985, on U.S. national television, President Marcos announced that he would hold a so-called "snap" presidential election to validate his legitimacy. The opposition scrambled to find a concensus candidate. After several abortive attempts the ticket of Mrs. Corazon Aquino, Ninoy's widow, and Salvador Laurel was formed. The election was held on February 7th, 1986 in the glare of international attention and acute U.S. interest. The result of the election has been the rebirth of the democratic ideal in the Philippines. The story of that rebirth is critical in understanding the direction that the



Filipino people have taken and in judging their chances for meaningful improvement in the standard of living in the Philippines. It is also critical in assessing the role the United States played in the transition from one government to another, and in assessing our future relationship with a traditional friend.

During the period February 1-16, 1986, I was privileged to be in Manila on an observation trip. In May I returned for ten days to assess the first 100 days of the new government. This thesis is a documentation of that critical time, and the people that made it happen. It is a personal recollection, taken from the unique perspective of one who had access to both the incumbent and the opposition points of view. It is my hope that it will shed light on the motivations for actions taken and words spoken, and that it will explain in human terms what was a very human experience.

## II. THE MARCOS ERA--FROM PROMISE TO TURMOIL

The Soviets have a useful phrase to describe the elements of a particular military and political situation: the correlation of forces. What was the correlation of forces that resulted in the unprecedented popular overthrow of a leader that had ruled his country for over 20 years? How had this man, who had come into office so full of hope and strength, of moral rectitude and indignation, arrived at the boarding ladder of an American military jet, to be spirited out of his country in the early morning hours of darkness. And who were the people who's names all of America came to know from the television and newspapers: names so well known in the Philippines, but hithertofore known only in the United States to a small group of Filipino exiles, State and Defense Department policymakers, and academics. Ask the average American about personalities in the Philippines and you would probably get but two names--Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos. So completely had the President assumed the persona of the country that he seemed to speak and act for it in toto. Now, however, we were hearing about others making headlines in the Philippines--less generally known perhaps, but central to developments in the small island country. Economic heavyweights like coconut baron Eduardo Cojuangco, and sugar principal Bobby Benedicto are talked about as the infamous Marcos "cronies". There are also many new, and often unfamiliar names that have become important. Cory Aquino exemplifies this group, and her people, both in and out of the campaign machine, are now the luminaries on the Philippine political scene.

Who is Cory Aquino, and what has brought her to the highest office in the Philippines? We know she is a widow, wife of a slain and martyred Filipino politician, we know she is a mother of five, and has been educated in

American schools. We read too of her deep religious convictions, and her quiet sense of justice. But these things alone are insufficient to bring political success. Something brought about the correlation of forces that catapulted this quiet 53 year old housewife to Malacanang<sup>1</sup>. The essence of what had transpired is easy to identify. President Marcos had lost legitimacy, he had lost the ability to govern effectively, and he was faced with a population which was no longer content to accept the crumbs that were left them. What started as coffeeshop rhetoric became the potent force termed People Power. Beyond this essence there is the convoluted, confused, and remarkable story of personal greed and ambition at the top. This portion of the story starts in earnest at the imposition of martial law.

By the early 1970's there were serious strains within Philippine society. Leading the way was the growing rivalry between groups of elites. The traditional oligarchy had existed in the Philippines since the Spanish, and as long as it consisted of primarily landed families there were well-defined boundaries. The rapid increase in industrialization in the 1950's and 1960's, however, fueled competition between the elites. The policies of decontrol and devaluation gave an economic edge to those involved in exporting, and producers of items for domestic consumption suffered by comparison. As the government sector involved itself more and more in business and the economy, the currying of favor of those who controlled licensing, quotas, and contract awards grew accordingly. Bureaucrats became wealthy by means of the influence they wielded, and a new elite structure was born.

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<sup>1</sup>Malacanang Palace, on the banks of the Pasig river, is the Filipino White House. President and Mrs. Marcos lived in the palace, and it served as the presidential office as well. Mrs. Aquino has refused to live in it's opulence as long as so much of the country is in poverty.

Another growing problem was the restiveness of an ever-increasing opposition. Not only were students rebelling against the inequities they saw between the rich and the poor; the rural population which composed the majority of Filipinos, the Muslims in the southern Philippines, and urban industrial workers were all becoming vocally disenchanted with the status quo. Demonstrations, strikes, and anti-government rallies became commonplace during 1970, and there were major student clashes with police in which several deaths occurred. The extremes in lawlessness and disobedience came from three major sectors: the highly organized criminal networks which controlled activities outside Subic Bay Naval Station, Clark Air Base, and inside Manila; the communists--including the Maoist New People's Army (NPA--the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the CPP), and the Muslim rebels in the South. Each posed a distinctly different threat, but in total presented the government with a volatile challenge.

Furthermore, there was the threat to President Marcos' government posed by the legitimate opposition. There were many pretenders to the throne, but the most creditable and politically dangerous opposition leader was Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, Jr. Benigno Aquino was born to a political family. His grandfather, Servillano, had been a general during the Insurrection, and had fought both the Spanish and the Americans at the close of the 19th century. His father was a Senator, a Cabinet Minister, and the Speaker of the Assembly. Despite these advantages in a poor country, Ninoy was determined to make his own way, and began working at age 15 in his brother's truck building factory. He started as a blacksmith, lathe operator, and carpenter; within two years he had gotten a job as a copyboy on the Manila Times. Quickly working his way up he became a reporter; in

1950 he became the youngest war correspondent in Korea. His involvement with crisis reporting led him back to the Philippines, and he went into the mountains as both correspondent and emissary of President Ramon Magsaysay, and secured the surrender of Huk leader Luis Taruc. Aquino was decorated by the government for his role in luring the intractable guerrilla down from the mountains. Following in his father's footsteps, he seized the opportunity that his notoriety provided and went into politics. He became the youngest mayor ever of his home town, Concepcion, and followed up this victory at age 28 by becoming the governor of the province of Tarlac. During his term as governor, on October 11, 1954, he married Corazon "Cory" Cojuangco, the cousin of latter-day Marcos coconut-crony Eduardo Cojuangco, and daughter of the owner of Hacienda Luisita. The hacienda, an 18,000 acre sugar-cane plantation in Tarlac, is still the Aquino family home.

At age 34 Ninoy ran for and won a seat as a senator. Again he was the youngest in the nation's history. His political career was increasingly successful, and he worked hard at building his public image. A spot on the Liberal party ticket as a presidential candidate in 1973 seemed assured. Aquino's opposition to the Marcos administration was well publicized and non-negotiable. In March 1971 Senator Aquino made a fiery speech to the Philippine Congress in which he accused President Marcos of diverting 26 million pesos intended for essential public services to supportive and friendly congressmen. On August 21, 1971, at a rally for Liberal Party candidates at Plaza Miranda, an attack with hand grenades left over a hundred persons killed or wounded, including candidates Sergio Osmena, Jr. and Jovito Salonga. President Marcos told the nation that the attack was the work of communists, and Senator Aquino took it upon himself to campaign for the injured. The Liberals did extremely well in the election. The

opposition was gathering real political strength, and the threat that they posed to the continuation of President Marcos' power was very real. The stage was set for martial law.

The alleged catalyst for the announcement of martial law was an assassination attempt on Defense Secretary Juan Ponce "Johnny" Enrile on September 21, 1973. Following a spate of bombings in Manila during the months preceding this attack (many of which occurred in bathrooms), Secretary Enrile's car was allegedly struck by a fusillade of bullets, none of which hit him. Senator Aquino warned the nation that martial law would soon be declared by President Marcos. Aquino had been leaked a document known as Oplan Sagittarius. This document purportedly described the implementation of actions which would secure the country by government forces. It had been delivered to Aquino by a military officer who alleged that his patriotic duty was to his country first, and his government second. In fact, much of the scenario foretold in Oplan Sagittarius, and its subsequent refinement, "Double-Strike", did come to pass:

On Saturday morning, September 23, 1972, Presidential Proclamation 1081, martial law, was implemented. Political risks across the country were rounded up, and one of these was Senator Benigno Aquino. His crime was that of being labeled a communist sympathizer, though there was no concrete evidence of this. Undoubtedly, it resulted from his position as the most vociferous and outspoken opponent of the proclamation's author. He received the news via a telephone call from a Colonel Romeo Gatan while he was at the Manila Hilton working on the House-Senate Conference Committee. The Colonel relayed the news that he had a letter for the Senator from Defense Secretary Enrile. In the letter the President had signed the order for Aquino's arrest.

The following morning he was escorted to Camp Crame (where ironically, Enrile and General Ramos took refuge when they defected from Marcos on 23 February 1986). From this morning forward Aquino spent seven years and seven months imprisoned in solitary confinement in military forts. He was not alone in his predicament. Other noted dissidents were also brought in, such as Sergio Osmena, Jr., the opposition presidential candidate in 1969, and Teodoro Locsin, Sr., father of the Aquino administration Minister of Information, and publisher of the popular and outspoken Philippines Free Press. One thorn in Marcos' side who escaped detention was noted opposition leader Raul Manglapus. It happened that he was on his way to the United States the day that martial law was proclaimed, and rather than return to sure imprisonment he stayed. His wife has told me that escaping from her own country with her children, via Mindanao, was the most frightening experience of her life. From the United States former Senator Manglapus organized and ran the Movement for a Free Philippines. He returned home following Marcos' departure.

From the viewpoint of the President and his loyalists, martial law was vital to turn the country away from lawlessness and to fight the growing strength of communism. In particular, said the President, the NPA was gaining in popularity in remote rural areas. The NPA was then measured in hundreds. The political aims of martial law were left unspoken. Defense Secretary Enrile headed the planning staff for martial law, and then-Presidential Executive Assistant Alejandro Melchor implemented it. At the time, there was a wide spectrum of support for the President's action. Criminality was rampant. The carrying of firearms had progressed far beyond the reasonable, and many parts of the Philippines resembled the American Old West. In the provinces local "warlords" had established

private armies to protect their master's territories and do his bidding, usually to the detriment of the local residents. The communist threat was there too, but it was minimal in comparison to what would come later.

A key issue in the selling of martial law to the public was the presidential desire to strip influence and wealth away from the traditional oligarchs, the supposition being that it would then be redistributed to benefit the less well off. Though many family names come to mind--Osmena, Soriano, Ayala, Araneta, and Elizalde for instance--the family that best typified the struggle between the "Old Society" and Marcos' "New Society" was the Lopez family. The fact that Fernando Lopez was Marcos' vice president only added to the irony. The Lopez family owned huge tracts of sugarland. They had also become deeply involved in cement, insurance, the media, and above all, utilities. They were an old, established family, with land holdings that went back to the Spanish days. In the Philippines, where to this day family and station are all important, theirs was a position of great socio-political power.

At the imposition of martial law President Marcos declared to the nation that a New Society was now underway, and that the old established order would have to make way for the "revolution of democracy". Systematically, and with great efficiency, the Marcos government proceeded to strip the Lopez family of their assets. Much was placed in the guise of government-run corporations, but the men in charge of those corporations were handpicked by the President, and in what was to be the future under martial law, a new set of oligarchs replaced the old. Eugenio Lopez, Jr. was placed under arrest by the President, and held with Sergio Osmena, III. After years of bargaining away more and more of their assets in attempts to win his freedom, in 1977 American brother-in-law Steve Psinakis



engineered a daring jailbreak in which the two detainees successfully made their way to the United States.

The Lopez story is symptomatic of what happened throughout the Philippines following martial law. As mentioned, a new oligarchy succeeded the old. These became known as crony capitalists. Cronies ranged from powerful associates such as Eduardo Cojuangco and Bobby Benedicto to ex-Marcos intimates such as Herminio Disini and Antonio Floriendo. Disini won his infamy for his role in the Herdis-Westinghouse deal for the Bataan Nuclear Power Project, a project started in the mid-seventies that has yet to produce a watt of energy. Disini now lives in reported comfort in Europe. Floriendo, who was a close personal friend of the Marcos', received his initial break when he was allowed to lease property on the Davao Penal Colony for his banana plantation, the Tagum Development Corporation. He then became involved in sugar refinement, banking, finance, oil and shipping. The stranglehold on the Philippines' two biggest industries, sugar and coconuts, was held by Benedicto and Cojuangco, respectively. Their control over these vital agricultural sectors was all-inclusive. Finally there are the assets of the Marcos and Romualdez families themselves, and perhaps no one will ever know the true extent of their holdings. Estimates now run as high as 10 billion dollars. At any rate, the immense wealth represented by these few was in stark contrast to the increasing poverty felt throughout much of the country. As the level of poverty, the national debt, and the number of presidential proclamations grew, so grew the numbers in the NPA. Until the very end of the Marcos time in power it was widely held that he created more communists than he killed.

An equally disturbing pattern in most minds was the slow erosion of constitutional authority from the system of checks and balances inherited

from the United States to a virtual one-man rule. The constitution in force at the end of the 1960's was the 1935 Constitution which was inherited from the era of American administration. One of its provisions was that the president was allowed only two terms in office. In 1970 the Constitutional Convention, or Con-Con, was called into being, and it convened in 1971. Originally mandated as a nonpartisan body, it quickly became extremely partisan, and bitter months were spent hammering out a draft constitution. This was accomplished in November of 1972. The draft constitution called for a parliamentary system, in the British style, with a prime minister who would speak for the majority bloc of the national legislature. The president's powers would be sharply curtailed, and he would assume a much more ceremonial role. Two actions negated the effect of this intention, and much to the contrary, strengthened the presidency. The first was the addition after martial law was pronounced, of Article XVII, the Transitory Provisions. Within the Transitory Provisions were procedures for the creation of an interim National Assembly (Batasang Pambansa) that would sit until elections could be called for a regular body. The interim Batasang was to be composed of the incumbent president, vice president, the members of the 1935 Constitutional bicameral legislature that desired to remain, and the Con-Con delegates that voted for Article XVII. Where the opposition really split was over the provisions regarding the presidency. The Transitory Provisions specified that the president would retain his existing powers under the 1935 Constitution as well as assuming the powers of both the president and the prime minister under the (new) 1973 Constitution. Added to this clause was one which gave the president the ability to henceforth rule by decree. Such decrees were to be law, and were not limited to the period of martial law. The opposition members of the Convention had long feared

the direction that the new constitution might take. As early as September of 1971 they had proposed and fought through (161-25) a clause which would eliminate the possibility of Marcos or any member of his family from holding the presidency under the new constitution. During the next year Marcos mustered all of his considerable forces, and under strong pressure from Malacanang the Con-Con did away with their ban-Marcos clause, 155-31.

The creation of the barangays, by decree, on December 31, 1972 provided a means of greater control of popular expression from the top. On January 7, 1973, the following questions were put to the barangays for discussion and subsequent voting:

- should the draft constitution be ratified?
- did the provisions of martial law have popular support?
- was the New Society the will of the people?
- should the interim National Assembly be convened?
- was Marcos running the country in a manner they approved of?
- should national elections scheduled for November 1973, be held?
- should the draft basic law be adopted?
- should martial law remain in force?

In referring these questions to the barangays the president superseded a national referendum which was to have been held on January 17th. The barangay review process took place between January 10th and 15th. At the end of the "consultative" period, which of course was also a lobbying period, a "vote" was taken by means of a show of hands at the barangay level of all citizens older than 14. The approval of these measures was announced on January 17th by President Marcos. He proclaimed that a clear and overwhelming majority of the citizenry had backed his proposals and so declared the draft constitution passed and ratified. Additionally, however,

he stated that the will of the people had revealed that they did not desire the interim National Assembly to convene, that martial law should be continued, and that elections should be suspended until 1981.

He had in effect "legally" assumed all constitutional authority. What the president offered the people was a society with renewed discipline, stability, and enhanced economic development at the cost of reduced personal and political freedom. For many this seemed a fair bargain. The opposition was forced underground, the jailed were largely voiceless, and the silent majority was just that. A major casualty of the change was the media.

The Philippine press had a long record as the most active and colorful in Asia, but it soon degenerated into a predictable set of government mouthpieces. The same was true of television. Channel Four became the government station, administered by the Office of Media Affairs, and the others were owned by cronies of the President. In the days following Marcos' departure newsmen came forth with stories of copy either sent directly from the palace, or written elsewhere, but pre-approved by the president prior to release. In the months preceding the election of February 1986, as international scrutiny became more and more intense, opposition press did emerge, and above it all the voice of the Catholic radio station, Radio Veritas, carried the opposition viewpoint. The power of this "alternative" press cannot be overemphasized. The opposition papers were sold out every day after printing, and often foreigners desiring copies would have to search for blocks.

So for 14 years the Philippines existed under the autocratic rule of one man and his wife. Imelda became both the Governor of Metro Manila and the Minister of Human Settlements. Son Ferdinand, (Bong-Bong) became a provincial governor, daughter Imee a member of the National Assembly,

reinstated in December 1977 after a plebiscite, and Imelda's favorite brother Benjamin (Kokoy) became the Philippine Ambassador to the United States.

True to his word the President did oversee improvements, and during the early 70's the Philippines was the talk of Southeast Asia. Lawlessness did drop dramatically, and thousands of privately owned firearms were turned in. Foreign debts were restructured, and import substitution policies gave way to flashy marketing schemes for indigenous export items. Non-traditional exports such as Filipino handicrafts were encouraged, and a young electronics industry was launched. The commodity markets for copper, copra and sugar were good, and an increasing number of sought-after Filipino workmen were repatriating hard currency from the middle east. Marcos pushed for the green revolution in new hybrids of rice and within a few years the country had become self-sufficient in rice. The national government centralized more and more services and built infrastructure. Dams, roads and rural electrification were meaningful projects that had valid intentions.

Martial law was not all good. Lesser men found ways to subvert the positive public good for private gain, and eventually this greed reached Malacanang. On top of this the world energy crisis of 1973-74, disastrous market prices for both sugar and copra, and runaway borrowing combined to produce the economic chaos of the 1980's. There is no doubt that all of the ills of the Philippine economy and culture cannot be laid at Marcos's doorstep alone. Responsibility is another thing. Having taken on the absolute constitutional authority to personally direct government, he had also taken on the responsibility for it's progress. The lavish lifestyle of him and his cronies increasingly served as an irritant to a public whose slice of

the pie was getting ever smaller. It was this simmering inequity that provided the fuel for peaceful revolution. The spark was the assassination of Ninoy Aquino.

Aquino had been in prison for five years when a military tribunal sentenced him to death in 1977. He had survived fasts--one of them for 40 days--and he survived his death sentence too. After the announcement of the sentence the public outcry, in the Philippines and around the world, was such that President Marcos saw that Aquino received a reprieve. On March 19, 1980, he had a heart attack. After deliberation, President Marcos allowed Aquino to travel to the United States for heart surgery. Prior to leaving he signed a statement which promised his return to the Philippines following surgery, and to abstain from making political statements. He went to the Baylor Medical Center in Dallas with Cory and the family, and the triple by-pass operation was a complete success. He accepted fellowships at Harvard and M.I.T. and considered his position. For approximately three months he remained silent, but eventually his convictions overcame his sense of responsibility to Marcos and he re-emerged as the leading opposition voice.

On the basis of conversations he had had with Filipinos in exile, and opposition members in the Philippines he constructed a speech, delivered on August 4, 1980, in which he warned Marcos of an incipient revolution. The speech made headlines in the Philippines and provoked an immediate response from a scathingly derogatory President Marcos. He derided the idea that urban guerillas were in being and that the situation in the Philippines was at all tense. In the end he questioned Aquino's sanity.

Within a month a timed series of bombings had occurred in Manila, claimed by the April 6th Movement. The movement was named for a day in

1978, one day prior to the national election for the interim National Assembly. In this stage-managed "election" Aquino was allowed by the president to run as the leading candidate from his own party, the LABAN<sup>2</sup> party--albeit from his prison cell. As a last minute sop to the American press, which was beginning to criticize the obviously flawed election, Marcos allowed Aquino to face government commentators in a live television debate. Public support of Aquino's performance was widespread. On April 6th, the night prior to the election, the opposition staged a noise barrage--a dramatic signal to the government that all was not well. For a short while anyone dissatisfied with the status quo had a forum, and Manila resounded with the cacophony of horns, firecrackers, pots and pans--whatever was available to make noise. To no one's surprise the president's party candidates won across the board the following day.

In 1981 President Marcos lifted martial law, stating that its goals had been achieved. Others saw no improvement in the condition of the country, which was still plagued by the same old problems, some of which were now worse. Mrs. Aquino states that her husband never wavered in his desire to return to the Philippines. "I will never forgive myself if I did not at least try", he said. His intent had been modified by conditions in the Philippines and by reports of the president's failing health. Aquino saw the possibility of convincing Marcos that he should normalize now and return the country to democracy.

He returned on 21 August 1983, traveling with an entourage of reporters and friends, including his brother-in-law, reporter Ken

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<sup>2</sup>LABAN, meaning fight, is an acronym for the Tagalog phrase *Lakas ng Bayan*. This left of center party was strengthened by Lorenzo Tanada, who became one of Cory's chief supporters.

Kashiwahara. They routed their flight through Singapore and Taipei in an effort to avoid attention, but Philippine Airlines had alerted the Taiwanese security forces of his presence, so it was obviously known that he was on his way. There had been much high level discussion of his return, including a meeting in New York with Imelda in which she allegedly offered him a million dollars to set up a business if he would settle anywhere but the Philippines. He was repeatedly warned that there were assassination plots against him and asked not to come. More significantly he was told by Imelda that the President was no longer in control of all factions of the government. Whether this was a warning that his safety could not be assured or the truth is unclear.

There was speculation that the military leadership was in fact gaining independent strength. On July 31st the President reinitiated the death sentence, and on August 2 Defense Minister Enrile cabled Aquino saying that there was definite evidence of a plot on his life and asking that he postpone his trip for a month. Aquino agreed to this; it appears now that the month may have been utilized by Marcos to obtain a kidney transplant. The trip did occur on August 14, flying from Los Angeles to Singapore. He arrived in Taipei via Hong Kong on August 19, spending the next two days in his hotel room being interviewed. On the final leg he donned a bulletproof vest. It did him no good when he was fatally shot once in the head within minutes of landing in Manila.

The shock and furor over his death rocked Manila, and was felt throughout the world as well. Outrage in the Philippines reached an all-time high, and the government mandated the Agrava Commission to examine the circumstances of the death. Over the months that the Commission was in session they listened to hundreds of witnesses, and examined video and still



photographic evidence. Their findings clearly implicated the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and specifically General Fabian Ver, the Chief of Staff and Marcos' closest ally. Marcos immediately claimed no knowledge of the assassination plans and expressed grief. During a private interview that I had on February 5, 1986, with a woman on the President's personal staff, she told me that she was present when the news of Aquino's shooting was received by the President, and that he was indeed shocked by it. According to this eyewitness, the President immediately picked up the phone and called a military subordinate, who he "chewed out" for allowing such a thing to happen. When he hung up he allegedly had tears in his eyes. In light of other statements made by the interviewee, many of which turned out to be verifiable, I have little doubt that she was telling the truth. Whether Marcos was a talented actor or truly not involved in the shooting remains to be seen. The findings of the Agrava Commission were disregarded when the courts acquitted all of the indicted. A short while later the President reinstated Ver as the Chief of Staff. Now there may never be a definitive answer. At the time it didn't matter. Ninoy had been killed.

In the wake of the death the country mourned, placing the responsibility for the crime on the Marcos regime. The government scrambled to find a way out of its predicament, and a widow's resolve began to harden. The confrontation was not to take place for three more years, but the event itself led to the direct involvement of millions of Filipinos in the politics of their country.

Over a million marched to the funeral, starting down the fateful path that would lead directly to the gates of Malacanang.

### III. THE OPPOSITION SOLIDIFIES

Following Ninoy's assassination "the opposition" became less a platform for disaffected politicians and more of a popular front. In the months that followed the funeral the MetroManila area was the scene of huge demonstrations and rallies against the Marcos regime. The killing was the catalyst that drove the nation to assert its anger against the economic stagnation, corruption, and human rights violations that they had borne in silence. Aquino, a very human politician, was killed; a martyr was born. His every word became prophecy, the creed and testament of a new movement. "People Power" was created by this single national tragedy.

On May 14, 1984, the country held national legislative elections. A plebiscite held on January 27, 1984, had voted into being two constitutional amendments. The first replaced regional representation in the National Assembly with provincial. This was an effort to minimize friction between different provincial groups that might live within the same region. In the past, the vote of a particular assemblyman might affect provinces differently. It also eliminated block voting, in which a citizen voting by party would automatically vote for every candidate on the ballot in that party. Secondly, the amendment created the office of the Vice-President, and a rule of succession in which the Speaker of the Assembly would succeed the Presidency should it become vacant prior to the 1987 election. President Marcos allowed these amendments to pass in an effort to show reform, and because they were unlikely to make any inroads on his power.

The opposition put forth two major coalitions. One was Ninoy's LABAN. In 1982 a new party was formed, the Philippine Democratic Party. Its founders were Luis Jose and Aquilino Pimentel, a well-known politician

from Mindanao. Their honorary leader was also Tanada; five months after it's creation the PDP and LABAN merged to form the PDP-LABAN.

By far the most organized party, and the most centrist in nature, was the United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO). UNIDO had it's roots in the 1980 Covenant for National Freedom alliance, a group of 72 nationalist leaders who signed a covenant calling for:

- 1) the end of the Marcos dictatorship.
- 2) the end of martial law, and subsequent free and fair elections.
- 3) the rectification of national economic self-sufficiency, human rights and dignity, and social justice.
- 4) national reconciliation (primarily with respect to the Moro question).
- 5) "liberation and protection of our country and people from all forms of foreign domination".

In 1981 they had petitioned the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) for an extension of the campaigning period to 120 days from 55, for equal access to the media, a verification of the accuracy of the voter registration rolls, and for a reconstitution of the COMELEC itself along truly non-partisan lines. When these measures were not forthcoming they boycotted the election. In April 1982, under the leadership of Assemblyman Salvador H. (Doy) Laurel, the UNIDO acronym was reassigned to a coalition of some dozen disparate parties. In the new organization a moderate alternative to Marcos was proposed, with a platform emphasizing freedom in the electoral process, the curtailment of presidential authority, and the freeing of political prisoners. Senator Aquino was a vice-president for External Affairs, and Raul Manglapus was the vice-president for Foreign Affairs. Though the Laurel and Aquino factions had their differences, in June 1983, just prior to Ninoy's death, they reconciled in preparation for the national elections.

Campaigning for the National Assembly seats was vigorous, and the opposition put up a momentous struggle for support. On the other hand, the Marcos' political machine seems to have underestimated the necessity for effort on their part. In particular, Imelda's territory, MetroManila, was a bitter pill to swallow when the opposition candidates swept all but one of the seats. When viewed against the backdrop of her own keen sense of organization this showing was doubly embarrassing. After the dust had settled the opposition had put over 60 of the 183 contested seats in office: 49 were UNIDO and 6 were PDP-LABAN. This was far in excess of the 25-30 seats that the President's intimates had estimated and a serious threat to the President's powerbase, the New Society Movement.

The inspiration for the creation of LABAN had been the 1978 creation of Marcos' own KBL<sup>1</sup> party. It attracted the remnants of the Nacionalista Party, under whose banner he had come into office in 1965, as well as descendants from the traditional Liberal Party. The Machiavellian brilliance of its inception is difficult to fault. As members, Marcos sought those who would owe their first allegiance to him, and he excluded no one desirous of the new affiliation. In concert with the barangay structure the new party further solidified the government's close hold on public opinion, services, disbursements, and above all organization. In short order the KBL had branches throughout the government bureaucracy. The Nacionalista and Liberal party names were no longer in vogue.

Meanwhile the opposition was forging a competitive realignment of its forces. When the Liberal Party divided in two, one branch was led by Eva Kalaw, who ran for Vice President in the 1986 election against Laurel and Arturo Tolentino. The other, and more viable of the two was that led by

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<sup>1</sup>Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, or New Society Movement.

ex-Senator Jovito Salonga. He had remained active in political life following the grenade attack at Plaza Miranda in 1969, although he was wounded and subsequently lost an eye. Following the imposition of martial law he went into exile in the United States. In 1981, after a bombing at a convention of the American Association of Travel Agents in Manila, Salonga, although in the United States, was one of 30 opposition leaders for whom President Marcos issued arrest orders. Salonga joined the opposition. So did Jose Diokno, who, in spite of his strong stand against the U.S. bases in the Philippines, was also in the United States for treatment of his medical problems. As the need for unity against Marcos became critical after the snap election was proposed, Diokno might well have been a serious candidate had he not been fighting brain cancer.

The radical left was reflected politically in the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) Party. It was primarily through the members of BAYAN that the stinging indictments of the "U.S.-Marcos Dictatorship" came, and key issues of theirs were the U.S. bases and nuclear policy. On the basis of these two issues Tanada was influential with Bayan. Their political power was centered in the central Visayas and Mindanao, and it was hoped that they could be persuaded to back Cory as a result of Tanada's closeness to her. This would greatly widen her power base, which was primarily in Makati (the business section of Manila), Tarlac, her home province, and in Cebu.

Between May 1984, and November 1985, the opposition took strength from its better-than-expected showing in the National elections, and from increasing U.S. criticism of the Marcos regime. During hearings before the Subcommittees on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations of both the Senate and the House of Representatives in September of 1984, the Subcommittee Chairmen, Representative Stephen J. Solarz and

Senator Frank H. Murkowski, delved deeply into Philippine affairs and U.S. interests. Their witnesses included noted academics and governmental officials knowledgeable of the Philippines. The questioning was prompted by concern on two levels: one, was the growth of the NPA a precursor to communist destabilization of the country and the potential loss of the U.S. bases there, and two, how best were U.S. interests served vis a vis President Marcos and political conditions in the Philippines.

As expected, the testimony ranged from the realpolitik of the Defense Department's Richard Armitage to the optimistic and hopeful Professor David Joel Steinberg of Brandeis University. What was significant was that this high level body was concerned with conditions in the Philippines and put forth extraordinary effort in ascertaining the answers to their questions. There is no doubt that from an Administration viewpoint the communist insurgency and the growth of the NPA was the most alarming condition. The role of the U.S. bases at Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Station in protecting our vital national interests made such a priority natural. But interestingly, as the testimony went on, and the subcommittee became expert on the Philippine situation the emphasis changed. In no one was this more evident than in the House Chairman, Stephen Solarz. Over the nearly two year period that he was gathering testimony he became a leading and outspoken critic of President Marcos. His primary focus shifted from U.S. national security to the promotion and survival of Philippine democratic institutions. He took particular affront at the wealth and lifestyle of the Marcos' and diligently sought evidence that this wealth was related to U.S. aid disbursements.

In March 1985, testimony was given before the subcommittee pertaining to Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Years 1986-87. As he opened the testimony on March 6, Chairman Solarz commented:

The deteriorating situation in the Philippines is a cause of deep concern. A discredited leadership, a declining economy, and a growing communist insurgency have placed the future of the Philippines, a nation with which the United States has had a long and historic relationship, in jeopardy.

The United States must be careful to avoid falling into another Iranian or Nicaraguan situation, where our support for undemocratic and repressive regimes ultimately led to the demise of our formerly close relationships with both countries and the coming to power of successor governments which, in many respects, were even worse than those they replaced.

I fervently hope, both for our own sake and for the sake of the Filipino people, than (sic) we can do better now than we did in those two previous unfortunate and tragic situations.

During the day's testimony Dr. Claude Buss of the Naval Postgraduate School, was asked for his assessment of the opposition's attempts to unify and whether the opposition could field a single presidential candidate should Marcos call early elections. In his answer he was careful to establish his caution with regard to UNIDO, emphasizing that it was a coalition, not a party. He posed the possibility of a Pimintel-Aquino or a Laurel-Kalaw ticket, and with prescience made the point that Mrs. Aquino was a "powerful unifying influence", and "persuasive and highly respected". Dr. Buss' final reflection was that the theme of the opposition was "First, Get Marcos Out", but that that might not be good enough to win a national election. As the ensuing months were to prove, that was nearly the case.

During a live television interview with Sam Donaldson and conservative columnist George Will on November 4, 1985, President Marcos,

apparently irritated at pointed questions about his policies and support, suddenly announced that he would hold a "snap" election on 17 January 1986, well ahead of its scheduled 1987 date. He added that the vice-president would be decided at the polls as well, but that the final decision on the election would be determined by the national assembly. More vexing to the opposition was his contention that he would remain in the presidency through the election, an action that was in conflict with the constitution.

In the minds of the opposition the early election posed two problems: the first and most obvious was the credibility of the whole affair. The national assembly was still two thirds KBL and could easily negate the proposed polling until the scheduled 1987 date, thus giving Marcos a publicity bonanza in his "willingness" to take on all comers without any real danger of losing. Secondly, the opposition had to take the announcement seriously from the first if they were to mount any kind of a campaign. To do that they had to first field a single candidate who could win. If more than one candidate emerged from the opposition Marcos would have a virtually unopposed--and hence legitimate--mandate to remain in Malacanang. In attempting to achieve unity the opposition had formed the National Unification Council (NUC) which had as its membership the major opposition party leadership and candidates. In November of 1985 the NUC was under the leadership of retired Supreme Court justice Celia Munoz-Palma, and all accounts were that the most probable and effective ticket would be a combination of Laurel, with his experience, and Aquino, with her personal magnetism and popular appeal. As Justice Munoz-Palma attempted to steer the Council through the options open to it--and there were many--she found herself torn between Cory's self-effacing hesitation to run and Laurel's overwhelming desire to run. She quit in anger after a tiff with presidential



aspirant Laurel, and the NUC found itself virtually unable to function.

Clearly, settlement would have to come from a source outside the political realm. The answer was the Roman Catholic Church. In a country which is 85% Roman Catholic--practicing Catholics--the church is a potent force in people's lives. The head of the church in the Philippines is Jaime Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila. Cardinal Sin has been a long time critic of the excesses during the Marcos years, although he sought to couch his critique in terms of suggested reforms while urging moderation to the opposition. Over the last five years, however, he had become more and more outspoken in his criticism. Under his leadership the so-called "Jesuit Mafia" in Manila, headed by Ateneo de Manila University president Father Joaquin Bernas, had begun preparing for the possibility of an early chance at elections. Father Bernas was close to Cory Aquino, and she grew to trust and depend upon his advice. Eventually the church was convinced that she offered the best alternative to Marcos, and she in turn chose Bernas as one of her closest advisors, a member of her "inner circle".

Cardinal Sin met with both Cory and Doy Laurel during the tense pre-election period when each was unsure of the best course of action. For Laurel this was the *raison d'etre* of his entire professional life. In training, temperament, and family background he was prepared to assume the Presidency. There might never again be such a confluence of factors favoring him, and so the internal pressure to remain free to campaign was tremendous. For Cory it was totally different. This was not a role she sought, nor was she convinced that she offered the best choice for her people. She recognized the lack of training that she brought with her and dreaded the loss of privacy that campaigning would bring. She early stipulated that she would only run if a petition campaign came up with a

million signatures in support of her presidency; this was accomplished with no difficulty. Beyond the church, Cory had the support of the Manila business community, which had become an extremely vocal and powerful force in the moderate opposition. Her primary booster in Makati was Jaime Ongpin, president of the Benguet Corporation and brother of Bobby Ongpin, one of President Marcos' staunchest allies.

The longer the unification process continued the more apparent it became that she was the only candidate acceptable to everyone--except Doy. Others that had stepped aside in their own aspirations, Salonga, Pimentel, and Diokno for example, would accept her as a presidential , but not a vice-presidential candidate. The reconciliation between her and Laurel saw-sawed back and forth throughout the last half of November and the early part of December. On December 2 President Marcos signed into law the bill passed by the National Assembly making February 7 the election day. The official campaign period was set at 57 days, and the pressure to field a candidate was really on. December 7th saw reports from the Aquino camp that "unity has been achieved", and Laurel stated, "We will make a very important announcement as to who will be the official candidate of the united opposition...to topple this unwanted and repugnant regime."<sup>2</sup> It was reported that Cory expressed surprise at this statement, and offered only that she would wait until Sunday the 8th. By the time Sunday had arrived things were as unsettled as ever. Early that morning Laurel had announced that unity talks with Mrs. Aquino had broken down, and the primary obstacle seemed to be one of party affiliation. Mrs. Aquino had indicated her desire to run for the presidency under the Laban ng Bayan party banner, with Laurel as vice-presidential candidate running under UNIDO. Laurel

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<sup>2</sup>Monterey Peninsula Herald, 6 December 1985.

criticized this proposal, pointing out that under electoral law in such an arrangement a vote for one would not automatically be a vote for the other. Mrs. Aquino's answer was to extend an offer to form a "grand coalition" under which they could both run. Though both spoke of the need for personal sacrifice in achieving their goal, neither was able to find the right combination. Meanwhile international observers became increasingly skeptical of the opposition's commitment. Because unification seemed an impossibility, the KBL was smug.

On Tuesday, 10 December Salvador Laurel registered as a candidate for the presidency, saying that there was now no chance that he would run as Mrs. Aquino's vice-president. At this point Cardinal Sin stepped in to mediate. He met with each candidate separately and then together. They hammered out a compromise in which Laurel would accept the number two position, but both would run under the UNIDO banner. On the following day Laurel and Aquino arrived at the COMELEC office an hour prior to the end of the filing deadline and registered their candidacy. In answer to reporters Mrs. Aquino said of Laurel, "I'm very grateful today for this very great sacrifice." For his part Laurel affirmed that, "It means that I am subordinating personal interests to national interest."<sup>3</sup> Across the country the opposition began to see the faint chance of victory.

At Malacanang, President Marcos had been running through his own vice-presidential options. The most often speculated was Imelda, his wife, but she allegedly did not want the nomination, and would refuse. Other candidates mentioned as possibilities were Defense Minister Enrile, Prime Minister Cesar Virata, or Labor Minister Blas Ople, but at least Enrile and Ople had previously made statements to the effect that they would certainly

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<sup>3</sup>Monterey Peninsula Herald, 12 December 1985.

entertain consideration as future KBL presidential candidates post-Marcos. Then too, they are strong-willed and capable men, and not the type for Marcos to have crowding him. The best candidate would be one that didn't pose a threat, brought in voters from territory Marcos did not traditionally hold, and gave an indication of reform without any real substantive change.

On Wednesday, 11 December he arrived at a choice which seemed to fit the bill. Arturo Tolentino, 74, was a former Foreign Minister who had been fired by Marcos in February of 1985 for his oft publicly stated views in opposition to those of the President. In answer to the question, "What are the qualifications needed for your successor?", he replied, "He must never disagree with the president." His past stance had called for reduction of the president's decree making powers, a repeal of Marcos family immunity, and ironically, for cancellation of the snap election on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. Not surprisingly, after his nomination he called off his scheduled fight of the election's constitutionality in the Supreme Court. He was the only KBL assemblyman who had won in MetroManila in the 1984 election and hence could buoy up a weak Marcos region, and he was viewed by those in the KBL as a "reformer". Finally, at 74 there was little likelihood that he could oust Marcos after the presumably successful election.

The two tickets were set. The election was now only 27 days away and the campaigning had to begin in earnest. The road show was on.

#### IV. THE CAMPAIGN

Whenever I think of the campaign that eventually brought Cory Aquino to power I will always remember yellow. Her party's color since Ninoy's fateful homecoming, yellow became the symbol of the cause, the campaign and the candidate. While Doy Laurel and his family stuck to the green color which was symbolic of UNIDO, everyone around Cory adopted her characteristic yellow...t-shirts, streamers, posters, bumper stickers et al. By the time I arrived to observe the election she was wearing yellow dresses and yellow eyeglass frames. The people loved it.

To call her crowds enthusiastic is simply a gross understatement. They were euphoric, hopeful, optimistic, feisty, and concerned. Rather than being totally swept up in the fiesta-like atmosphere, they listened intently to the statements, the promises, and the arguments. Having been denied real democratic access since 1972 they were not about to take anything for granted. In rally after rally she spoke to the crowds from truckbeds, impromptu stages, basketball courts, and open places along the roadside. In typical Filipino fashion her rallies were more than just political forums: they included some entertainment, occasionally fireworks, and the opportunity to mingle and talk with neighbors about hope and the future.

The President put on more elaborate productions. He hired the most famous personalities, singers, and comedians to warm up the crowd, splashed the area with huge banners and signs, and in what had always been heretofore acceptable political behavior, provided compensation for attendance. Perhaps rice, perhaps some always-needed pesos. The meager assets of the Aquino-Laurel coffers couldn't be spent in such a manner, but surprisingly, this time it wasn't necessary. The people came in droves on

their own, to see Cory, to be a part of an historic movement. If they were too poor to afford one of her t-shirts they dyed one of their own. One woman I saw had made her top out of a yellow bathtowel.

It was on the campaign trail that Cory really came into her own. She wound her way throughout the provinces, went up into Pangasinan, and down to Cebu and Mindanao. She grew a little during each stop. As she witnessed the people coming out to see her, to hear her, often in streaming rain, she began to become the real center of the campaign. She had started as a symbol of her dead husband, as the "anyone but Marcos" candidate. Now she had become the one person needed to rally support, and Ninoy had become a symbol. As she grew she learned.

In early January she made the mistake of telling supporters in Baguio City that she would allow communists to participate in the government, when she meant to say participate in the political process. Marcos leaped at this gaffe, pointing to it as evidence that she was soft on communists and would encourage the insurgency to grow. She countered with a press conference in which she corrected her earlier statement, saying, "So long as Communists renounce all forms of violence, we welcome them into the government...all Filipinos who sincerely desire to help the government and the country are very welcome. I would like to assure everybody here that I will not appoint a Communist to my Cabinet."<sup>1</sup> Her theory was that the vast majority of insurgents were driven by economic and social deterioration, and estrangement from the political process. While not suggesting that opening up free dialogue would eliminate the hardcore, she sought to undermine their non-ideological support and lessen the degree of military involvement in the solution.

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, 7 January 1986.

To counter Marcos' charges that she had no platform, that it was a proposed government without programs, she began to outline them at major speeches. On January 6, while speaking before some 700 persons at a joint meeting of various business and management associations, she outlined her economic program. On the 16th she presented the social program in Davao, and finally on January 23 she delivered the speech Tearing down the Dictatorship. Rebuilding the Democracy to the joint Rotary Clubs of MetroManila. In this description of her political platform she carried on a theme which her strategist, Mark Brown, had introduced at a huge rally in Mindanao--that Marcos was a coward. This tact was so effective, and so crucial towards demonstrating her position as a person of strength, that I have reproduced the text of the Mindanao speech:

I am here in Mindanao in the midst of the violence and devastation that Mr. Marcos has wrought. And I am not afraid to be here. But Mr. Marcos is.

I accuse Mr. Marcos of cowardice because he has not come to Mindanao in the past 10 years to see for himself the horrible effects of his greed, his brutality and his ignorance.

I accuse Mr. Marcos of cowardice because he will not stand before me and dare to hurl his charges in my face and let my answers be heard.

I accuse Mr. Marcos of cowardice because he needed over 2,000 troops to kill one man--Ninoy Aquino. And he has the gall to say he fought off hordes of Japanese soldiers at Besang Pass. What a laugh.

I accuse Mr. Marcos of cowardice because he whimpers about a little scratch in his hand and ignores the hole that his people blew in the face of Jeremias de Jesus and the mangled bodies of the Opposition after the grenade attack he launched at them in Plaza Miranda.

I accuse Mr. Marcos of trying to cover up his cowardice with a salad of military decorations none of which he ever earned in the field of honor.

I challenge Mr. Marcos to stand up like a woman and answer my charges of his cowardice with truth--if he dares.

From here on she pounded away at this theme, and there was little Marcos could do to counter it. His illness made travel difficult. Furthermore, there were areas of the country where he could not travel in safety. The McCoy article on his medals came out and received wide coverage in the opposition press and in the United States. Cory steadfastly refused uniformed security forces around her, relying instead upon family members and a couple of unarmed plainclothes security men. Marcos was carried through the crowds on the shoulders of security men that were initially labelled as enthusiastic supporters, and uniformed law enforcement personnel were much in attendance. By contrast, I only saw one uniformed policeman at any of Cory's rallies or assemblies, and he was busy putting an Aquino-Laurel bumpersticker on the stock of his M-16 Armalite.

The remainder of this story will have a personal cast to it, for I arrived in the Philippines on 31 January to observe the election. Following the story via the news service in the United States had prepared me with certain biases, of which I quickly disabused myself. One such presupposition was that the level of pre-election violence in the Philippines was fairly high, another was that there was a significant degree of anti-American sentiment in Manila. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. I stepped off the Philippine Air Lines 747 into Manila and found it predominately the same as remembered, but with an important difference. The difference was in the political excitement generated by the people--all the people.



Those things which struck me as being the same are best represented by impressions:

- the distinctive humid, warm feel of the air, and the unmistakable odor that is Southeast Asia.
- the noise of unrestricted traffic. Mufflers long since dead, but unburied; horns blaring and the continual dialogue of competing drivers communicating imminent disaster avoidance by means of those horns.
- stopping for a red light; the cab I'm in is besieged by fatalistic, but undaunted gum, cigarette and newspaper hawkers. A bedraggled, lone woman begging at the window, an obviously well-fed baby on her hip.
- the well dressed and successful Filipino riding in air conditioned insularity behind tinted windows in shining, late-model cars that somehow remain undented in the chaos that surrounds them.
- the lifting, happy patter of Tagalog between a little girl and her father upon her sighting a calesa, or horse-drawn carriage, on this warm evening along Roxas Blvd. Little girls and horses obviously share a universal bond.
- a free concert in Jose Rizal Park draws a mildly appreciative crowd who giggle appropriately at the slapstick antics of the MC and a comedian. The Three Stooges are alive and well in Manila tonight.
- concern by every cabbie that I not while away precious hours of this short life without "a partner". The rejoinder that I am happily married with a wife in America brings swift assurance that America is a long way away.

And yet, as familiar and reassuring as these images were, there was a palpably different spirit in the city, and the reason for it was only a week away. While Americans were consumed with grief and intrigue over the tragic loss of life in the space shuttle disaster, Filipinos were united in

preparation for the February 7 Presidential Snap election. There were few vertical surfaces in the city not festooned with political posters or stickers of one side or the other, and it would take an army of MetroManila Aides<sup>2</sup> and half of the bay to wash them away afterwards, a prospect that perhaps only I was concerned with.

To get a feel for the political climate upon arriving, I took a highly suspect and unofficial poll of waiters, cabbies, bellmen, masseurs and the like; the following political views were expressed:

- the outcome is "totally uncertain" at this point, (but Marcos will win)
- Aquino/Laurel offer the most hope for the most people
- 20 years is too long for any leader in any country (sorry FDR, you were mentioned too...)
- sure the election process will have irregularities, but the Philippines is not the only country in which this is so....
- one of those sampled was openly for Marcos/Tolentino (though he asserted with assurance that Mrs. Aquino would actually receive the vote of the majority).
- when asked to place themselves as the next President and present their first actions as such, not one person asked would venture a reply. Is there an American cabbie alive who doesn't have a ready opinion on the salvation of the Union?
- the New People's Army is strong in the provinces and growing overall.
- when I asked if Marcos did win, fairly or otherwise, would there be trouble, the answer was yes. The respondent then sagely assured me that if Aquino won, fairly or otherwise, there would be trouble.

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<sup>2</sup>A program started by Imelda Marcos, the MetroManila Aides are general sanitation-type workers who keep the main boulevards of Manila swept and clean. They are recognizable by their straw, wide-brimmed hats, their yellow shirts, and red bandanas.

Traveling around the city one certainly felt a sense of excitement and an almost carnival atmosphere. The Aquino/Laurel constituency was very upbeat, with their bright yellow ribbons, banners, and bumper stickers very much in evidence. While there didn't seem to be a distinct differentiation in partisanship along economic lines--at least to the casual observer--there was an obvious split along private and public sector lines. The public display of Marcos materials on state-controlled agencies and corporations, and in Marcos/crony businesses (such as the Manila Hotel) was blatant, while the Cory campaign materials were usually found on private, middle class properties and automobiles.

The media too was absolutely split along party lines, and there were apparently no local media, either print or film, which were middle of the road. Marcos controlled most of the newspapers, such as the Daily Express and the Bulletin Today, and all of the television except the U.S. Armed Forces Far Eastern Network (FEN), which is only receivable with a cable converter. Channel 4 was an actual government station, and the others were owned by cronies. The opposition found an outlet through the so called opposition press such as the New Manila Times and the Malaya. It's primary wide spectrum voice was the Catholic church radio, Radio Veritas (RV).

The savvy Mr. Marcos used every election campaign trick in the book. Daily 2-4 full page ads in the newspapers recounted the various social advances made under his administration; a 10% pay hike and cost-of-living bonuses announced on February 1 for all government employees (including the military) were retroactive to 1 January. There were headlines of NPA terror squads coming into Manila, and government actions to save the citizenry from them. A reprint of a February 2, 1944 article by Benigno Aquino, Sr. appeared in the Tribune, praising (out of context) the Japanese

occupiers and those Filipinos working with them. President Marcos signed into law in a public ceremony a bill insuring that slum residents of over ten years duration would not be evicted in order to expedite development of such areas (a previous government program). Then there was the announcement of various reform packages and a call for constitutional change towards limitation of Presidential powers (no date given); announcement of a new survey showing Marcos and the KBL well in the lead, and so on.

The Aquino/Laurel statement was made most eloquently by its total absence in most of the traditional media. The next morning I went for a walk around the Luneta Park area, taking in the Sunday picnickers and families together on a day of holiday. There was a Marcos rally getting sorted out at the grandstand. I took lots of pictures. There was also an ABC film crew out. The rally seemed to really be a motorcade, and it was well organized. Many CB radios, everything new, lots of police about. Interestingly enough, there were no spectators, just participants. After getting the feel of the pro-Marcos forces (who seem committed to me) I went to my companion's hotel. Dr. Claude Buss and I were to do this trip together, and like me he was ready to get at it. On the plane over he had sat next to Ditos Bondoc, the ex-president of the Philippine Export-Guarantee Bank. Ditos was a key element in an 8 million dollar transfer between Philippine businessman Vincente Chuidian and Marcos. As a result of the publicity that the deal generated in the States he was currently on the downside of Presidential favor, but still in their employ. He had indicated that the President would most likely see Dr. Buss the next day, and he would let him know if he heard. He also passed on in conversation that the President was furious that none of his advisors or Ministers had any specific solutions/ recommendations for reforms. This

was certainly not what Marcos was putting out to the press. The party line was that a comprehensive reform package was ready to be unleashed as soon as he had the "mandate of the people".

The following day our first stop was the Solidaridad Bookstore in Ermita. It's near the corner of Mabini St. and Padre Faura, and is somewhat of a landmark in the reform movement because of the stand of it's owner, author Frankie S. Jose. Upon reaching the store we met Frankie's wife Tessie on the street, and after warm greetings she informed us that Frankie had gone to the Manila Hotel to meet with Stan Karnow. Upon our arrival at the famous old hotel that had housed General Douglas McArthur, we first proceeded to the Fourth Floor, where I had discovered the U.S. Embassy Press Center. We met the USIA press coordinator, Mary Carlin; she was very nice, and extremely helpful. She gave us the first look anyone had had at the composition of the U.S. observer team headed by the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.). I gathered up a ton of press handouts and dropped them in my room and headed for the lobby, to find Stan and Frankie. We did indeed meet them in the lobby bar, and after I'd been introduced around we sat down to talk--a rambling talk that lasted four hours! Joining the table as the afternoon went on were:

- Dr. Guy Pauker, the Rand Corporation, and a great Indonesia scholar.
- Drew Pearson, the producer of the Philippine documentary that Stan Karnow is making.
- Edith Coliver, ex- of the State Department and now the head of the Asia Foundation in the Philippines.
- Marty Pisner, Warren Wytophski, and Murray Edelman of the CBS News Election Polling section.

The conversation was fascinating, a blend of where-have-you-beens, what-have-you-been-doings, have you seen's \_\_\_\_\_, and of course the election. Interestingly enough, the three pollsters were very sure that cheating was not possible, that NAMFREL, the National Movement for Free Elections, would guarantee the double-checks necessary. No one else at the table held this belief, Stan Karnow least of all. It was all he could do to keep his temper. The three newsmen then owned up to the fact that it was not only their first time in the Philippines, it was also their first time in Southeast Asia. This got a knowing nod from the crowd, but the three remained firm in their belief. Time would tell. Eventually hunger got the better of everyone and we broke up for dinner. I was invited out with the rest of the group, an invitation I wouldn't miss for the world. The conversation was fascinating, covering all of Asia, and during dinner we were joined by Terence Smith, the CBS News correspondent. On the walk back to the Manila Hotel, Stan Karnow and I had a very interesting conversation on the current situation in Kampuchea, a subject upon which he is very well informed. The presence of distinguished and learned people such as this would make this more than just observation, it would be a learning experience par excellence.

The paper the next morning was the same old Marcos propaganda, but in a hotel owned by the Marcos' I guess you can't expect them to slip an opposition paper under the door to your room each morning. After breakfast I went to the Ristorante Roma in the hotel, for this morning, the Third of February, was to be the first anniversary of the Kapihan ng Manila - an informal weekly breakfast club of the movers and shakers in Philippine government and business. I sat down at an empty place that a man kindly offered me and he turned out to be Carl Mydans, the famous Life magazine (now working for Time) photographer. His son, Seth, is the New York Times

correspondent covering the election. Carl introduced me to Mr. Jaime Lava, the Minister of Education. Then Mr. Butch Millena, the Executive Assistant to Prime Minister Caesar Virata joined the table. He was very charming, and very sure that the President didn't have a worry in the world in the election. "The people are solidly behind him with the exception of a few malcontents." It is at this encounter that I got my first taste of questioning the Marcos true believers without letting my own ideological predilections get in the way of "meaningful dialogue". I quickly found that my best line of questioning came from asking a general question, such as what do you think ought to be done with the economy?, and then just listening. Often what they didn't say was as important as what they did say.

When Carl had to leave to do a "shoot" of Prime Minister Virata his place was taken by a Mr. Chris Sherwell, of the Financial Times in Singapore. He is well spoken and quite intelligent. He in turn introduced me to Mark Fineman, who apparently had just recently gotten a job with the Los Angeles Times, edging out Guy Sacerdoti of the Far Eastern Economic Review. Congratulations were the order of the day. At about 9:00 it became apparent that little else of import was going to occur (the rumor that the First Lady would show up turned out to be false).

By now we were agreed that it was about time to get together with the opposition, and our contact there was Teddy Locsin, Jr., Cory Aquino's speechwriter. ( In the new Aquino government he is the Minister of Information). I had met Teddy in a Southeast Asia seminar and was looking forward to seeing him again. His father had been the publisher of the Philippine Free Press, a famous and popular periodical prior to the Marcos years, and it had taken an opposition stand during the beginning of the Marcos excesses. When martial law was proclaimed in 1972, Teddy Locsin

Sr., the publisher, was imprisoned. Since freed, he is living in Manila with his wife. Teddy Jr. had started republishing the Free Press from the States, where he is a lawyer, and Dr. Buss had been a consultant from the beginning. It was upon his urging that Teddy decided to put the third issue out from Manila. Now it had led to this.

Our taxi driver took us to the only Aquino headquarters that he knew, but this was the Makati area headquarters, and we were told there that we wanted the Media Headquarters, in the Cojuangco Bldg., in Legaspi Village. In the first headquarters we were struck by the youth and the enthusiasm of the volunteers. The place was teeming, and there was yellow everywhere. They were suspicious of us at first, but on finding out that we really did know what was going on in their country, and were not lined up on the Marcos side, became extremely friendly and helpful. Upon arrival at the Cojuangco Bldg. we immediately ran into Teddy, who was incredibly busy, but looked totally involved, with the glow that that brings.

The action for the day was a speech that Cory was giving at the Hotel Intercontinental for the combined American-Philippine Chambers of Commerce. Teddy urged us to come along--as if anything could have stopped us. The Intercon was an absolute madhouse, and we arrived at the same time Cory did. This was the first real look at her movement up close, and it shaped the way I saw them henceforth. The emotional outpouring here was astounding, and very, very real. There were tickets available for perhaps 500 persons, and yet there were at least 3000 there. The entire lobby, mezzanine, bar, and stairways were jammed. We couldn't even get close to the room in which she was speaking, and that was with her speechwriter!



We took a spot which was close to a closed circuit TV monitor. We were all literally shoulder to shoulder, and I prayed that there was no fire, or cry of fire! Once Cory started speaking I'm not sure even a fire would have moved the crowd. I was hemmed in on all sides by ladies and as I listened to the speech I was struck by how completely politicized these women had become. They listened to every word, and nodded in silent agreement to Cory's call for attention to the homefront prior to working on foreign policy. This had the complete support of the crowd, and I later congratulated Teddy on his tactic. Another speech element that had broad appeal was the analogy she made of Marcos to a pharaoh. "Let my People go! Let the Filipino People go!", she cried, and the crowd began chanting, "Coreee, Corcee, Coreee!!!" Those that said that this 53 year old housewife had no charisma were very wrong, and I suspect that among them were those that were advising President Marcos. It was at this point that I first began to change my mind about Mrs. Aquino. I had arrived from the States convinced that she was a candidate of convenience, and that the voters would be voting for anyone-but-Marcos. But after listening to her, and watching the people in the audience, I became convinced that she was the candidate, and that she had become larger than herself; the housewife had become lost within the candidate. Later Teddy agreed to this assessment, saying that the change took place during the Mindanao rally, when almost a million showed up in the rain to hear her. That clicked something inside of her, and she became the leader, and the undeniable focus of the opposition.

Following the speech we made our way inch by inch to the lobby, and found Teddy, who filled us in on some elements of the speech. He didn't listen to the delivery, and was amazed that she had used the Pharaoh analogy, saying that she hadn't liked it when it was first presented to her.

He went on to say that she had become very independent about what she says in public, often rewriting speeches, or deleting lines at will. This was a big change from the beginning of the campaign, and further evidence that she was growing ever stronger.

As we talked she came right by us, surrounded by well-wishers, and a couple of staff. She looked tired, we all agreed, but was smiling happily, and the public exposure was obviously good for her. Teddy mused that she was very down on security, would allow no armed men around her, and no one in anything looking like a uniform. She had refused bulletproof vests, armored podiums, and any kind of special vehicle. This caused her security chief, a retired colonel, recurrent nightmares, but she maintained that if they killed her it would only mean that she would join Ninoy a little earlier. Point in fact, to be seen with overt security then would have defeated the Marcos-as-coward scheme. As this discussion was going on Teddy informed us confidentially that Steve Psinakis, the rabidly anti-Marcos opposition figure in the States, had informed them that there was a hit team on the way over to kill, "one woman and four men", in the Aquino camp, and that they were members of the Beowulf and Devil's Disciples gangs. After some consultation the decision was made to go to the Embassy and relate the problem to the Defense Attache. In this way he would be alerted, and could possibly offer some advice.

On the way to the Embassy we stopped back at the headquarters and met with Mark Brown. Mark is a Britisher who works for The Economist, and was allegedly in Manila on a leave of absence to help in the campaign as a strategist. Some days later, at a dinner between the two of us he confided in me that he was on the payroll of the D. H. Sawyer public relations firm in New York, as well as being on the staff of The Economist, and that the firm

had been hired to provide some expertise in campaign strategy. This made much more sense, but throughout the campaign he stuck to the other story to everyone else. Curious. Remember it was Mark who came up with the Marcos-as-a-coward strategy; he is extremely sharp. While there we also met Lupita Kashiwahara, Ninoy's sister, who with his brother, serves as Cory's campaign manager. Lupita is a television director in civilian life, and is extremely competent in the management of the media.

Having finally gotten all the principals together we headed to the Embassy where we had a private meeting with the Defense Attache, Colonel Halley, and the Regional Security Officer (RSO). To my amazement the discussion--on an impending assassination attempt--was all very matter of fact, and I realized that I had made another quantum leap in realpolitik. This level of consideration is really no different than any other, and one accommodates to it rapidly. Other than informing the Embassy, and alerting their intelligence for possible corroboration this meeting struck me as being pretty useless. The attache had no specific recommendations to make that were acceptable, since Cory would not countenance any visible security enhancements. All present agreed that a sweep of the area for explosives must be made, and a request by Cory's security chief for metal detectors brought assurance from the RSO that no such technology was available in the Embassy, and that he would have to do a visual search himself were he in a similar situation. The Aquino people made a plea for some smoke grenades in case an emergency get away from tomorrow's mass rally became necessary for Cory. Col. Halley indicated with some exasperation that he had no direct access to smoke grenades, but would see if he could get some through the U.S. Navy at Subic Bay. Plainly he thought it a superfluous request, as did I, but he was willing to play ball with them, if only to

appease their sense of need. One concrete suggestion that Colonel Halley and Dr. Buss had in common was that these threats be made known to Malacanang Palace, the thought being that if the government was alerted publicly they automatically assumed some responsibility for Cory's protection, and if something did happen they couldn't say, "well we can't be held responsible, we didn't even know." The last thing the RSO said before he left the meeting (plainly thinking that this was a bunch of amateurs messing in his bailiwick) was that the rally tomorrow was not the likely place for a hit, too many logistical problems. He would concern himself more with her daily comings and goings, and in particular her home on Times Street. With that the meeting ended.

I agreed with him.

My last impression of the meeting was that even in something as fantastic as this, commonsense takes one a long way.

Before calling it a day I stopped for a nightcap in the Tap Room bar and saw J. V. Cruz, the Philippine Ambassador to Great Britain. I'd been introduced to him by someone at the breakfast meeting and stopped by his table to say hello. He was very cordial, and obviously did not remember who I was. Probably thought I was a journalist, and he was at his most charming. The Ambassador was in Manila to campaign for the President, and had temporarily "given up" his post for the privilege of working for the President he believed in. Pardon me for cynicism, but this was a man working for whom he believed would emerge the victor, and from whom he could expect a reward. At any rate, he was very charming, and had been out of the country so long that he has lost almost all his accent. Too bad that he is so readable, he would make a real asset for his country were he interested in the country first and foremost.

The following day was to be Cory day! After meeting Dr. Buss for breakfast we headed to the U.S. Embassy to meet with Captain Dennis Fowler, USAF, a Naval Postgraduate School graduate, and the Assistant Air Attache. Dennis is sure that his time at NPS was well spent and that he has a far better handle on things than he would have had he not attended. He in turn introduced me to Captain Gilroy, USN, the Naval Attache.

Following our meeting I went to the Cojuangco Bldg. and met Teddy to march to the Aquino rally. We would go from Makati, the business center, to Luneta Park, a distance of probably 8 kilometers. There were to be no buses, a Marcos ploy and logistical requirement, as the Aquino people could not afford them. Instead there were five routes and everyone would march and converge on the park. If it were a success there would be around a half million people.

Prior to our setting out Teddy had some last minute things to settle with Cory, and I waited in the Media "inner sanctum", a place with which I was to become very familiar. I introduced myself to two very attractive ladies who were providing screening inside the door; there was one of the ubiquitous blue-uniformed armed security guards outside the door. The ladies were Lane and Babette Aquino, cousins of Ninoy. Both were typically Filipina upper class in that they have lived abroad extensively, speak Spanish, Tagalog, and English, are extremely well-spoken and at ease in any social setting. It took very little time in Babette's company to establish that she is independent, a businesswoman, and used to being escorted to social affairs by the likes of Ambassadors, or at least Consuls General.

In telling this I do not mean to imply that all of Cory's supporters were the upper class oligarchy. Most would probably have fallen in the middle to lower middle class range, but family is another matter, and the

importance of family in Filipino politics cannot be overstressed. During the hour or two that I had to wait for Teddy to wrap up things with Cory and get ready for the march I had the opportunity to meet and talk with a Mr. Sidri, a Muslim convert to the Cory camp. His case was special for several reasons, and he was in the media room to be exploited, at least in a news sense. Mr. Sidri is not only a Muslim from Mindanao, he is also Imelda Marcos's nephew. Beyond that startling fact he is also a founding member of the Moro National Liberation Front, the MNLF, which in the Philippines is like saying in Belfast you were a founder of the IRA. Mr. Sidri told me he was a banker by trade, and although he was somewhat hesitant to expound on his recent endeavors he did tell me that he had split with the MNLF when their methods began to favor terrorism. His contribution in its inception was the arrangement of financing from Libya. Surprisingly, I did not find him anti-U.S., at least not on a personal basis. His conversion to the Aquino cause could have a very positive effect on the tricky question of Muslim separatism should Cory achieve the Presidency, and that is a question that will face her.

When Teddy returned from his meeting with Cory he was accompanied by "Chito" Ayala, who when introduced assured me he's not that Ayala-- Ayala being one of the big (read rich) names in the Philippines. Rich, however, is a relative term in the Philippines, and it turns out that he is a Davao plantation owner and has extensive holdings--as well as a private security force. A very charming man, but with the unmistakable bearing of a man who is used to being obeyed. I have met this man's type before--in Admiral's stripes.

After gathering the various and sundry people who are the last to leave the headquarters we finally boarded a bus that would take us a couple

of blocks to the official Makati rally starting point. By the time we arrived there was a sizeable crowd, and the holiday atmosphere of a happening. It was like Woodstock in yellow, as the Cory t-shirts, posters, streamers and signs seemingly came out of the woodwork and onto the street.

As we gathered and started to march I found that we were at the head of the procession. With Teddy, Chito, and me were the Aquino ladies and the middle level organizers. Cory and Doy Laurel would, of course, join the rally in progress for security's sake. As we marched through Makati I was struck by the intense emotion of the onlookers, and by the youth and vitality of the Aquino supporters. Every block more and more people walked off the sidewalk and into the marching throng. By the time we arrived at the Luneta Park there was a solid mass two miles long behind us. It was a heady feeling. I didn't have anything to relate it to. It must be like being at the head of a victorious army. The people did everything but strew flowers in our path. There wasn't a single building that didn't have cheering, flag waving supporters hanging out of windows, or the characteristic yellow confetti streaming down.

I am sure that it will be years until there are sufficient copies of the yellow pages available in Manila, for most of them seem to have been cut into 1" squares. The kids were bright-eyed and excited, and the young adults equally so. I only saw one dissenter, and she was an ancient and withered old woman who for some reason took incredible affront at the youth, the enthusiasm and the sway of the crowd. At one point, after she had engaged in a small shouting match with an indulgent group of marchers, she actually attempted to pull down one of their Cory signs. A staunch Marcos supporter if there ever was one!

The crowd was too happy to do anything but laugh at her disbelievingly and then she was left behind. Neighborhood after neighborhood was walked through and still the people joined in. As we turned on to Roxas Boulevard the snaking column became more visible, and it really impressed me until the park came into sight and I saw the convergence of all the lines. My god, I'd never seen so many people, never mind been in the middle of them. Everywhere there was yellow, and laughter, and smiles. It was as we passed the U.S. Embassy that I saw the Metro policeman putting the Cory bumpersticker on the stock of his Armalite M-16. I yelled to him to give me a picture and he proudly held his weapon up, the yellow sticker prominent. So too was his nametag. A very brave or not very prudent man. I titled the picture, "Changing of the Guard".

The only way to get the whole crowd in one picture was to get up high and I could see people up on the roof of the Manila Hotel. I pushed through the crowd with Teddy (a 30 minute job), said goodbye and walked around the perimeter of the park to the hotel. After bluffing the floor manager with the story of my journalistic needs he assigned a subordinate to escort me up to the roof and I joined the professional press corps. The television cameras of CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, and Japanese, Scandanavian, German and Australian networks were set up, as were both microwave transmission antennas and satellite links. The big earth station satellite dish was down on the ground, and it's my understanding that the various networks were timesharing to get the all-important images home. Below us was an evershifting carpet of yellow. Estimates ranged from an absurdly low 125,000 to a high of 2 million.

The high was given by Lupita Kashiwahara, who with her customary defiance had braved this Marcos bastion to come up and take a look at her



handicraft on behalf of Cory. No one seemed to know who she was, so I walked over and said hello, and asked her for her assessment of the numbers in the crowd. It was at this point that she laughingly asserted that there were at least 2 million. It took only a couple of questions until the news persons around us realized that she must be a someone, and instantly a crowd formed. Suddenly she was in a forest of microphones, tape recorders, and there was a video camera in her face. She took it all with great aplomb and deftly charmed the press with her humor and confidence. At one point she looked over the edge, 17 stories down, at the immense crowd and said to the newsmen, "Look at the people! It's the same everywhere, we've won already..." My estimate was 400, 000 and it was later called half a million in the opposition papers.

Back down in the lobby it was very quiet, and I had a very distinct sense that the huge crowd just outside the hotel grounds made the management somewhat uneasy. In the lobby I ran into Reynaldo Gregorio, whom I'd been introduced to a day or so before. Ray is a Stanford alumnus, an ex-student of Professor Buss, and like all of us, a Buss enthusiast. He was the Executive Vice-President of the Land Bank of the Philippines, and a Marcos man, although it must be said that he was very aware of the problems within the country. It would probably be more accurate to say he was a Government of the Philippines man. The Land Bank was associated with land reform efforts--which he admitted had been scarce--and the granting of housing assistance to the poor. Ray seemed a committed man, and felt strongly that reform was very necessary, but told me he was desirous of achieving that reform through the institutions presently in place.

His work fell under the purview of the Ministry of Human Settlements, and that was Imelda Marcos' baby. In fact, she headed the

Ministry. Along with Ditos Bondoc, Ray was another example of what Imelda was later to describe to me as, "her boys". Ray was very relaxed and eager to hear what my observations were from the afternoon's march. It was difficult to come down from the high of the crowd, and the sense of being on the side of truth and justice, but in deference to him I made it as factual as possible. One of the conclusions that I came up with as the two weeks went by was that even if Cory should somehow emerge victorious, there were going to have to be allowances made for the many legitimate and involved people in the present governmental structure. Ray Gregorio seemed a typical example of this mid-level man.

At a breakfast interview the following morning we met with Hezel Gacutan, the Deputy Executive Director and Director for Research in the President's Center for Special Studies, the Office of the President. A very impressive business card, I must say. Hezel (pronounced Hey-zel) is an erudite and warm individual, and talks primarily of things academic. The most consistent message I heard was that he was most anxious to get back into "pure" academia, specifically a Philippine-American Studies Program. He would particularly like to return to the States for study. I couldn't help but think that perhaps Hezel was looking to a future in which some government employees might be out pounding the pavement. The showing that Cory made at her rally, called the "miting (meeting) de avance" had made it into the front page of the paper, though not television, and there was no denying that there was more than a new political breeze blowing across the land.

As the hundreds of thousands took to the streets in protest of one-man rule, the President vowed a rollback of oil prices to domestic markets and signed seven more Presidential Decrees, including such measures as a

reduction in the price of urea fertilizer and a definition of government corporations and their roles in national development. It was apparent that the President's tenor was changing. Perhaps this victory would not be as simple to pull off as first thought. Of his opponent, whom he had initially spoken of as causing him embarrassment by making him run against a woman--and he had gone on to stipulate that women belonged in the bedroom--of her he now said,

Ideally the nation's business should have been at the front and back of our minds throughout this campaign. But this is, you see, a free country; and we cannot force anyone, not even a candidate for the highest office of the land, to discuss the issues intelligently, when she prefers to gossip and overact instead.

Now, lest any one of you jump on that last remark as an indictment of the other sex, let me say that I am referring only to the tendency to gossip and hysteria of my opponent in this campaign, who is incidentally a woman.<sup>3</sup>

After Hezel departed for his office, we left for the Solidaridad Bookstore. Upon arrival we made the three story climb up to Frankie's sanctum sanctorum, where he welcomed us warmly and immediately launched into a no-holds-barred political discussion. He was dismayed by the concerted effort that Marcos was making in the campaign and feeling, I think, the cold hand of reality moving up behind him. It was obvious that he felt that worse days were ahead. He was sure Marcos would "win" the election, and having done so would reinstitute harsh measures, cracking down on his foes.

This might have been widespread and easy, since the election had really polarized people into easily discernable camps. Frankie was sure he would be one of the first to be picked up, and had already made

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<sup>3</sup>Bulletin Today (Manila), 5 February 1986.

arrangements for his wife to take their granddaughter to Hong Kong over the next critical days or weeks. He was really into a radical litany for a short while, fervently asserting that the "stinking moorings of a stagnant society must be cut", and that only revolution would provide the profound change that was necessary. After a time he settled back into his chair and smiled at us, perhaps embarrassed at his own fervor. What was remarkable was that this mild and intellectual man, who apparently likes nothing better than writing his novels of Philippine life--often the seamier side--had become one resigned to revolution. It became apparent to me for the first time that revolution can be a quiet thing in many ways.

As I headed home the Marcos rally was getting organized, and by the time I walked from Mabini Street to the Luneta the crowd was getting quite large. There were a couple of easily discernable differences between this rally and Cory's yesterday. First was the unbelievable number of buses that were in use for the transportation of rally attendees. This practice is so well organized, and is such a common political tool that there is even a name for the people who use the buses. They are known as "hakots", from the Tagalog verb for "to haul, or carry in". The number of buses lined up along Roxas Boulevard must have numbered in the hundreds. There were indeed many people, most of them sporting new red, white, and blue Marcos/Tolentino t-shirts.

In order to be fair and non-judgmental I took essentially the same route that I had taken the day before. I skirted the park, walked through the crowd, and went to the top of the Manila Hotel to take pictures of the throng. One immediately noticeable difference was the lobby. It was jammed! The place was jumping--wall to wall with red, white, and blue-clad Marcos supporters. As I circulated, and observed people, it was obvious that

this was not a cross-section of the masses. No indeed, these were the privileged, those with a stake in the status quo. After my rooftop look I descended to ground level, and went into the bar for a San Miguel beer. The bar, like most of the ground floor, was full, but there was one table free, and I collapsed into the deep upholstery, tired and hot. To my right Ambassador Cruz was doing his thing with a foreign journalist, who sounded American. At the next table there were eight young Filipino men, all with short hair, and all very serious. Beyond them was a table of seven girls, excited, giggling, playful, and really decked out in Marcos gear. T-shirts, bumper stickers on their shirts, headbands, hats, jackets.

As I drank my beer and watched the actors, a woman in her mid-to-late twenties came into the bar, and stopping by the table of girls had a word with them, obviously a confidante and soul-mate. There was no room for her at their table and she looked around for someplace to light. The only open seat in the bar was now opposite me, and she looked at it briefly, and shyly. An American gentleman first and foremost, I rose and offered her the spot, which after a moment's hesitation she accepted gratefully. She wanted nothing to drink, really I think she just wanted a place to get off her feet for a while. As I had done since arriving in the country, I began to sound her out on the election, and my questions were simple and innocuous enough. Who do you think will win, what are the chances for cheating, would the President step down if Mrs. Aquino should win, etc.

She answered the first hesitantly, and began some routine banter with me and it was obvious to me that she was trying to get me off of the subject, but I was fired up by the week's events and assumed that anyone in this crowd would eagerly hold forth on the joys of Marcos. If she wasn't surely it must be that she didn't really think I was interested. I pressed on until she

was almost forced to answer me, and reluctantly she did so, saying of course President Marcos would win.

I began to notice that while she was answering me she was looking over my shoulder, and I glanced back to see at whom. It was one of the group of serious young men, and he was watching us very closely. He turned his gaze on me for a second, which I met, and his interest was definitely not friendly. Turning back to the girl, who introduced herself as Mella, I pressed on to get her assessment of the potential election fraud--a subject which, after all, was on everyone's lips. She became plainly uncomfortable with this, and while keeping her eyes on the table at my back, leaned forward to talk to me very softly. "I can't talk about these things here...those men are soldiers from the Palace, and they are listening to me", she said.

I asked her if she would talk to me in my room, or elsewhere in the lobby. She said it would have to be in the room, for the lobby wasn't safe, and I gave her the number. Then she asked me to leave first, and I did so in my best 007 manner, loudly telling her how nice it was to have met her. Then goodbye. This was really getting strange, but nothing ventured, nothing gained. I headed to the elevator. After a few minutes she came out of the bar and to the elevators. She did not acknowledge me, and taking her cue, I ignored her. Sure enough the nosy soldier came out of the bar and looked in our direction. Ignoring her completely I looked right by him as if he wasn't there, and he returned to his companions.

At the correct floor she followed me off the elevator and then was silent until we entered the room. She told me the men in the bar listening were the personal bodyguards of the President's son, Bong-Bong. She told me since she had been a clerk/secretary in the Palace for six and a half years she is watched very carefully. She told me that all of the girls at the

other table were also from her group at the Palace; they work directly for the President.

I asked her to be certain that she wanted to talk, because I didn't want to cause her any trouble. She replied "O.K.". She consented to notes on the recorder, but would not give me her last name or let me take any pictures. What ensued was a freeflowing, three hour long interview during which she unloaded story after story of pre-election fraud, campaign payoffs, buying of rally members, votes, and sympathy. Following the taped portion she continued with allegations off the record. As I remember it, she claimed:

- the President's son, Bong-Bong, is actually dead, murdered by the brother of a girl he raped during a "date". The man standing in is Imelda's nephew, who has changed his hair, clothing, and mannerisms to suit his predecessor. This can be proven with photoanalysis, since the "new" Bong-Bong is four inches shorter than the original. She had detailed information on the condition of the body, the method of transport, and burial, as she was called in from home at night to assist, then sworn to secrecy. The reason for the charade according to her was the shameful way in which he died.
- soldiers routinely brought bales of marijuana to the Palace basement after drug interdiction missions, and guarded it 24 hours a day. She had been to the basement once, out of curiosity, and was shooed away quickly and forcefully. Her impression was that the Presidential Security Guard was selling it.
- Mrs. Marcos routinely carries a small pistol in her purse, and both she and the President wear custom made bulletproof vests.
- contrary to press reports from the Palace, the President is very ill, and the staff was under instructions "not to notice". She said that even after walking across the office he had to stop for many minutes and catch his breath.
- the five New York properties currently being examined for evidence

of linkage to the Marcos' are in fact theirs, and that there is also a Swiss bank account that is regularly used.

- the President did not know of the Aquino assassination plans ahead of time. She saw him with tears in his eyes when he was informed, and that everyone that works at the Palace knows when he is faking emotion and when he is not. Following the word of the death she observed him calling an unidentified military officer and chewing him out personally for not taking adequate care so that this wouldn't happen.
- Mrs. Marcos' closets outdid a Hollywood set, with a motorized belt and hat rack that descends from the ceiling, gallons of perfume, incredible jewelry, and hundreds of pairs of shoes. This information had all been garnered during open house days that the President periodically had for the staff. (The whole world has now seen the pictures which corroborate these descriptions.)

Finally, she related to me a story of some compassion, and I can see how the Marcos' won loyalty amongst the inner circles. It seemed that her grandmother had had a serious heart attack, and after arriving at the hospital was told that she would only survive if she had a bypass. There was, of course, no way that this could be accomplished financially, and so the grandmother resigned herself to death. Mella went to Mrs. Marcos and explained the situation to her, asking if there was anything that could be done. In response the First Lady picked up the phone and had the operator ring her hospital. The orders were given over the phone, and within ten minutes the surgeon and operation scheduled. The operation took place, the 80,000 peso bill was paid by the Palace, and five years later the grandmother was still very much alive.

After she told me this story I asked her about her feelings of responsibility towards them, and her ability to willingly tell me, a stranger, about all the corruption she had witnessed. Her response was that she thought the Marcos' were very nice personally, but that the Filipino people were suffering, and that Marcos had been bad for the country. Even after all



our discussions, however, she still maintained her original stance, that she would vote for Mr. Marcos because she wanted peace for her two babies, and thought it would initiate street warfare if he lost.

It had become apparent at this juncture that press passes would be of great use, and so we set out to obtain them. This required a letter from the Embassy Press Office, which Mike Anderson provided on the spot, and then a run over to the Manila Hilton to the Government of the Philippines Office of Media Affairs temporary press office. There we were informed we needed pictures, which could be obtained in the basement. Down we went, and with a few pesos (as we used to say in Olongapo, he was showing his peso-nality), we got them while we waited. By the time we got back upstairs the staff workers had found out that we had ties to the Palace, and were very eager to be of assistance. It must be said that they were completely professional when we were just a couple of "newspapermen", but now the girls are all smiles and warmth.

Another pass needed was to the NAMFREL headquarters. NAMFREL is the National Movement for Free Elections, and was the civilian watchdog group which not only monitored the election for compliance with the election code, but also made their own count. This was a very important element of the unfolding tableau, as it was their count which put Cory ahead, and by which she laid claim on legitimate victory. To get our NAMFREL passes we went to their headquarters, which were at La Salle University in Green Hills, a suburb of Manila.

When we arrived at Green Hills, which is how everyone referred to the headquarters, we found that the International Observer Team was there getting an orientation. I sat in on part of it, and they were very attentive to the procedures, asking good questions. Ex-President of Colombia, Misael

Pastrana was the head of the group, and was taking copious notes. After getting a quick tour of their facilities, which included substantial personal computers and radio equipment, we moved to the Aquino headquarters. Upon arrival we found that Teddy Locsin was out, and instead we had an interesting conversation with Raul Contreras, Cory's media coordinator. About this time Teddy returned and expedited our obtaining Aquino press badges. Before the end of the trip they would prove useful in gaining entrance to closed press conferences.

The mood around the Cojuangco building was markedly different this day, the day before the election. Teddy was wondering aloud who would head the revolution if Cory lost, and he was deadly serious. There were comments on possible secondary governments, perhaps operating from Cebu. This was serious stuff, and it was sobering to be with people who were actively planning a revolution. Teddy told us that the warlord types that were leaning towards Cory, (referring to the plantation owners in the provinces), were already leaving for Hong Kong, that they had opened their arsenals, and their people were armed and ready for the revolution if it became necessary. As we left for Teddy's parent's house so that he could get some extra clothes--he was going up to Tarlac with Cory overnight where she would vote in her home province the next day--he continued speaking in this vein. I'd never seen him like this, he was really sure of violence, and for the first time I was hearing that even if Marcos did not start it, there were elements in Cory's circle that would. It seemed inevitable then, and I had a whole different attitude towards the situation. These people were all in a very precarious position.

Teddy's father, Teddy, Sr., took tremendous pleasure in taking me into his library. He lovingly took down an old volume and opened it to show me

James Joyce's signature inside. The library that he had before World War II was his pride and joy, and one of the best private libraries in the Philippines, but the Japanese burned it. When asked how he felt after seeing it all go up in flames, Teddy Sr. is said to have replied, "At last I am free!"

Following merienda, the traditional Filipino mid-afternoon drink and snack, we went back to the headquarters to drop Teddy Jr. off and then off to get some opposition newspapers and finally back to the Manila Hotel. As we arrived at the hotel there was a group of Senator Lugar's Observation Team setting out for their observation points election day. I met John Finley of the State Department, and Larry Niksch of the Congressional Research Service. Inside we ran into Rey Gregorio, who introduced us to Mrs. Emma Benedicto Valeriano. She is a very vivacious woman, and we learned that her son by a first marriage, Gregorio Araneta, is married to Irene Marcos, one of the President's two daughters. Emma's second husband was General Napoleon Valeriano, who was famous as a Huk-fighter under President Magsaysay. Emma is a woman that has been in higher social circles all of her life. Dr. Guy Pauker joined the group, and with his old world manner was the perfect counterpoint to Emma.

After goodbyes Rey and I decided to have dinner at the hotel to continue our discussion of the economics of land reform and urban housing for the poor. A couple of tables down Senator Lugar was having his dinner, and somewhere around coffee and dessert Rey introduced me to Adrian Cristobal, press secretary to President Marcos, (his Larry Speakes), as well as a newspaper columnist. He struck me as very tired, somewhat cold, and detached. As I retired that night I turned on the television to Channel 4, the government station and there was Cristobal, doing his best to make the

President look good, and talk Cory down. He still looked tired, even through the makeup, and showed the strain of pre-election maneuvering.

The next day, February 7, was the day of reckoning. The Philippine nation would choose between the aged and ailing dictator and the inexperienced, but fresh housewife. Little could the occupants of either Malacanang or the White House suspect the chain of events that the presidential election would unleash.

The scene was set, and the actors in place.

What was unknown was that the audience would take the stage.

## V. THE ELECTION

The saying that hope springs eternal could have been born in Manila on election day. While people would often tell you that Cory didn't really have a chance from a practical standpoint, they would also hasten to add a few words about the great feeling that working for her gave them. They loved to talk about the positive things that would occur if she could somehow win. Nothing could have stopped them from voting their consciences. The level of observable commitment in the face of potential serious backlash was inspiring.

There is a misperception in the United States, at least among the general public, that whatever the Filipinos were doing over there, it wasn't really holding an election. Perhaps the media coverage was responsible for this more than anything else, with their need to immediately grab the viewer with a memorable image, or the reader with a glaring headline. Most opinions at home favored some version of the poor benighted Filipinos naively casting their votes without the benefit of an adequate electoral process.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. The practice of law is extremely popular as a profession in the Philippines; legal argument and jurisprudence are practiced throughout the society. Though the Marcos presidency had taken many of the constitutional checks and balances out of government, the idea of law is very much a part of the fabric of Philippine society. Clearly, this extended to the election procedures, which were the subject of lengthy critiques in both the domestic media and whenever two or more people got together. The National Assembly published the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines of 1985 and distributed it freely. The

appointments to the Commission of Elections were followed closely, and COMELEC procedures were a running discussion in the press. The COMELEC, established in accordance with the 1973 Constitution, consists of nine members, appointed by the president, who serve for seven year terms. Acting in both administrative and judgmental roles they oversee all election laws and disputes. They have the responsibility of accrediting political parties and insuring that the electoral procedures are carried out in a lawful manner. In doing so they are empowered to call out the Armed Forces of the Philippines (with the consent of the president). Their charter includes the registration of voters, the designation of the principal opposition party, which has the right to field election observers in the polling places, the preparation and distribution of ballots, polling and counting procedures, and the settling of disputes. As an adjunct to these responsibilities they may empower citizen arms, such as the National Movement for Free Elections, NAMFREL, to assist in monitoring the election.

Two facts became immediately obvious: 1) the COMELEC should have ensured that all of the fraud that was being anticipated was averted, and 2) the president had an extraordinary amount of control over what should have been a completely nonpartisan body. In fact, as of late January there were only seven of the nine positions filled, and of those seven there was only one that was accepted by the opposition as being nonpartisan. Though the appointed commissioners,

Victorino Savellano (Chairman)  
Jaime Opinion  
Quirino Marquinez  
Mario Ortiz  
Mangontawar Guro  
Froilan Bacungan  
Ramon Felipe, Jr.

all claimed to be absolutely nonpartisan, there was an insistent call from the opposition for the president to appoint two additional members who would be acceptable to them. As the commission often works in three panels of three members each, it was hoped that the three "opposition members" could each sit on a panel, and act as watchdogs for inpropriety. Prior to the election President Marcos did make moderate appointments. Still, the COMELEC never attained a clear and unbiased reputation.

The Catholic Church made a statement in a pastoral letter read in Manila churches on 1 January, in which Cardinal Sin and six bishops urged the Commission to count the votes "honestly". In seeming retribution the COMELEC ruled that priests and nuns were prohibited from participating in political activities. This brought an immediate response by the opposition in which it was pointed out that such a ruling was unconstitutional as it violated the rights to free speech, suffrage, and free exercise of religion. Furthermore they pointed out that the ruling specifically applied to Catholics, and disregarded the Iglesias ni Kristo church, which had come out strongly in support of President Marcos. Ironically, what the COMELEC took exception to was the pastoral letter in which the bishops instructed their parishioners to pray and work for a free, orderly and honest election. In other words just what the COMELEC was tasked to do.

Nonetheless the procedures were refined. Ballot boxes were procured which had a transparent side to allow for verification that no ballot stuffing had occurred (although there were only enough for approximately 1/3 of the 90,000 polling places). NAMFREL was accredited as the official watchdog citizen's group, and rules concerning the election-day activities of international observers promulgated. After making the statement that any and all observers were welcome in the Philippines to verify the honesty of

the upcoming election, President Marcos was apparently taken somewhat aback by the response. Aside from the foreign press, which numbered about a thousand at its peak, there were pre-observer inspection teams, the official U.S. observers headed by Senator Lugar, and the International team sponsored by the National Democratic/Republican Institutes for International Affairs. In a palace statement issued January 26 President Marcos said, "The eyes of the world are already focused on us. In fact, there are already meddlers and interventionists in our midst."

It struck me that he was using a tried and true formula: if things are not optimal yet, buy time by creating a common enemy. This tactic of trying to deflect animosity to foreigners didn't ever take hold however. Everywhere I went throughout Manila the people were happy to talk, expressive of their appreciation that the press coverage in America likely had a lot to do with whatever honesty there was to be. The image of puppet Marcos and his American puppetmaster seemed to be limited to the tiny rallies that occurred once or twice outside the embassy. Even these were obviously stage directed. As I moved through one of them taking photos and recording the chants the participants were friendly and joking. One young man of perhaps 15 or 16 told me that they had been paid by the KBL. He did not know why.

The next morning Ditos Bondoc invited us to come to Paranaque while he and his wife voted. The COMELEC's 50 meter buffer zone around polling places which the foreign observers were to remain outside of was a paper restriction. There were no guards or police, and no one was at the entry to the school. It was a real festival atmosphere, and though it was just eight in the morning the school was jammed. Each classroom in the two-story building was teeming, each a distinct precinct. There were lines everywhere.



and everyone was being very patient. All ages were represented, and we settled into a group of Ditos' acquaintances. They were a mixture of Cory and Marcos supporters, and were having what were essentially good-natured arguments over the merits of one candidate over the other.

The leading Marcos man was Mr. Castro, the ex-village leader of his neighborhood (his son now fills the generally unwanted position). It seemed that Mr. Castro's brother-in-law was close to Marcos. The leading opposition spokesperson was Mrs. Del Pin, who was outraged at anyone who could lightly laugh away what she saw as the dictatorial excesses of the Marcos regime. As she movingly made her points known her husband applied those subtle marital communicatory gestures--a press of the knee, a tap of the foot--to let her know that she might be going too far. Plainly, he was a man who was thinking that he would still have to live around Mr. Castro if and when Marcos won (which everyone was expecting). It was also obvious that much of the fervor with which they spoke was for our benefit. There had been so much anticipation of foreign observation and journalism that any Caucasian, especially one with a camera, like me, or with senatorial white hair, like Dr. Buss, was assumed to be on an official mission.

On the whole the polling appeared to be quiet, orderly, and with sufficient safeguards present. There were at least five women I saw wearing NAMFREL volunteer smocks. NAMFREL, which had been utilized in the 1984 national elections and was thought to have been largely responsible for the success of the opposition in achieving office, was established in 1983. This election it was expected that there would be over half a million volunteers. The first indication we had of cheating turned out to be the overriding national election fraud. While we stood in this group and talked, four people came up complaining of not finding their names on the registration. They

were furious at not being able to vote. It took now-Minister of Finance Jaime Ongpin five hours to find his name on the register. The daughter of one of the women talking approached her mother to tell her that when she went to vote she found she had already voted! Sure enough, her signature was even on the registration. Or at least it was someone's signature of her name. This tactic, in areas of strong Cory support, and even of known Cory sympathizers, resulted in the nationwide disfranchisement of up to six million voters. No one will ever know how many really were cheated out of their vote!

After an hour at the first polling place we visited some other areas of the city. We went through Camp Bonifacio in an attempt to see whether the army was on any type of alert. The huge camp was practically deserted. Either the troops had been told to stay indoors, or they were deployed somewhere else. After driving through the camp we went to Malacanang Palace. Here too it was very quiet. Except for a relaxed group of soldiers at the gate, it was dead. The barbed wire barricades were up on the street by Mendiola Bridge, but this had been normal since the imposition of martial law. A drive by a couple of other polling places showed the scene to be peaceful and orderly, and so we returned to Dito's house for lunch. He lives in Forbes Park, a very exclusive compound in Manila, and the homes would do quite well in Beverly Hills, or Hillsborough, or any area you would care to name. During a family lunch Dito's discussed his involvement with the Prime Minister, Caesar Virata, whom he worked for in his connection to the Export-Guarantee Bank, and the First Lady, through the Ministry of Human Settlements. These two were at odds, making Dito's the man in the middle. In those pre-election days he was having a tough time trying to keep everyone happy.

After lunch the driver took us back to the Manila Hotel, and while Dr. Buss talked with some people in the lobby I ran up to the Press Office to get a copy of the speech that Senator Lugar had given to the Chamber of Commerce the day before. The speech wasn't ready for distribution yet, but Mary Carlin was listening to a VHF radio in the office. Reports of election cheating and violence were wide open. One hotspot was in Makati, so we hopped a cab to the Aquino headquarters. Upon arrival we met with Teddy and Mark Brown, and found the situation to be in an uproar.

From the relative peace we had felt in our look around in the morning they had gone to an intensely dour view of things. There was terrific concern in the headquarters, and almost a sense of hopelessness. This resulted primarily from a statement that Senator Lugar had made earlier in the day that so far the elections had looked substantially, "...clean and fair..." The feeling at the Aquino headquarters was that this was the beginning of a whitewash by the U.S., that the Reagan administration wanted her to accept a Marcos victory and reconcile. According to Teddy, Cory was ready to personally lead demonstrations at the U.S. Embassy in protest.

Both Dr. Buss and I felt that this was premature, and did our very best to counsel patience and some faith. We could not believe that the Lugar mission, with it's distinguished personnel, would allow a whitewash. After about a half hour of cooling off, Teddy went up to assuage Cory's feelings. Guy Pauker arrived; he had similar information, and while we were talking further reports of vote fraud at the polls came tumbling in. The Aquino coordinators were looking for a foreign journalist to go to one particular precinct, in the hopes that a pale face and a camera would force compliance with the rules. Of course we went!

As we drove the woman in the front passenger seat was really incensed. She kept telling us she was for Marcos, but that she wanted a fair election, no matter who won. These women were like so many that we met. They had become totally politicized in this campaign, and were willing to put their time, money, effort, and ultimately their lives on the line. You simply had to respect them.

Upon arrival at the Palanan precinct it is was a quarter after five. The polls closed nationwide officially at 3:00 PM, but here they had closed just as we arrived. In one of the precinct rooms on the second floor they were starting to count ballots. There was a young man there, about 25 I would guess, who approached me desiring that I document the anomalies in the system. He was concerned on several counts: first, that the voting had continued after the official polling closure, second that the NAMFREL volunteer had left, and third, that the representation required at the ballot count was not present. There was supposed to be a representative of each party, the KBL and Unido, as well as a non-partisan poll watcher. There was no poll watcher, and the "Unido" representative was a very young girl in a yellow t-shirt. She had no identification, and could not give any kind of information about her organization.

When I moved in to take photographs of the ballot counting, they started over and recounted. This alone elicited a rise from the watching crowd, and the man intimated to me that it was only my presence that brought about the recount at all. When I asked him if he would give me his name for a report, as a witness, he was not at all hesitant. He told me he was simply a concerned citizen. It seemed that there were many such people, and I again wondered to myself if Marcos had not badly underestimated the will of the people.

As we left we were the object of some very hostile stares and muttering from a group of men across the street from the school. As I attempted to take their picture they all turned away. Back at Cory's headquarters I filled out a report of election irregularity, using my witness' name, and then it was time for a press conference by Rene Saguisag, Cory's press spokesman. He provided the first returns which showed Cory ahead, and then went on to read a group of election irregularity reports. The assembled journalists were most interested in these, and as he read areas where violence had been reported several of them took off to find it.

Following the press conference Guy thought that the Makati Municipal Hall was the place to be, as that was where municipal level ballot collection was taking place. When we arrived there we found the entire area full of people. The Municipal Hall is a large building, with an open courtyard in the rear, and a small amphitheatre at the far end of the courtyard. At the center of the courtyard there was a semicircle of tables set up, and at each table a number of precincts from within the Makati municipal area were represented. After the ballot boxes from those precincts were trucked in they were opened and the tally sheets removed. The tally sheets are a hand tabulated count of the ballots within a particular ballot box. The tally sheets were then canvassed, or gathered and collated, at a second group of tables that was manned by members of the Commission for Elections. There were copies of the tally sheets for both COMELEC and NAMFREL, and a copy stayed in the ballot box.

After the ballot boxes were opened, the tally sheets removed and canvassed, the boxes with their ballots still inside were taken behind the amphitheatre to a small prefabricated building, where they were to be stored until after the final election results had been posted. It was this storage that

caused the most fear. After sunset, the area was lighted by many electric lamps, and many people come to watch what was happening. At one point there was a sudden rush of bodies around the ampitheatre, towards the shed. Word of a crisis spread like wild fire, and in one poignant moment a boy of perhaps 10 or 11 took Guy Pauker's hand, and with tears in his eyes, implored, "Please sir, help my country!"

The three of us made our way around to the trouble spot, as did an NBC film crew that was also there. The confrontation was developing between some NAMFREL volunteers and the police guarding the building. Since there were no windows in the building where the ballot boxes were to be stored the citizens were concerned that further cheating might take place inside the closed building. They were highly suspicious, and wanted admittance to oversee the situation. Since the tally sheets had already been removed I didn't see the problem, and asked a man about it. Their fear was that after the election results were all counted the government, if it should be losing, would protest the election and this would necessitate an automatic recount. In the meantime, if not watched, the ballot boxes would be reopened and fake ballots substituted. In the recount there would then be a clear majority for Marcos. Thus their paranoia about the closed building.

I moved up towards the door to the building and asked the policeman if I could go in, but he was emphatic that no one but workers could enter. There was no arguing with the policeman. I had to watch that I did not make any moves which might later be construed as intervention. By the time we were ready to leave there had been a change of policy and the citizens were being allowed in, two at a time, to see things. Eventually we had had enough and called it a night. The citizenry, which included nuns, priests, students,

housewives and business men, literally encircled the building through the night and for the next week.

Upon returning to the hotel I learned that the Lugar statement had made as much of an impact in the embassy as it had at the Aquino headquarters. The press office was still trying to track down the exact statement that the Senator made, and was anticipating a second statement specifying the many instances of election fraud that had been observed.

At the hotel I had dinner with Mark Brown, and it was then that he told me he was with D.H. Sawyer and Co.. I took the opportunity of this one-on-one dinner to press on Mark my strong conviction that Cory must show restraint and wait until Senator Lugar had had time to meet with the rest of his team. I was convinced that after he had talked to people like Larry Nicksch he would issue another statement, and modify his comments to state clearly that the fraud was predominately on the government side. During a very satisfying conversation I believe I got across the following points:

- 1) premature violence was not in anyone's interest; if there was to be an Aquino-led insurgency, or civil disobedience they must have all their ducks in a row. My advice was to wait at least 24 hours to let the election process take place before acting. To fail to do this would give Marcos all the reason he needed to crack down and reinstitute martial law.
- 2) that U.S. national interests were not served by keeping Marcos in power, that we cannot run the bases as another Guantanamo, and if we lose our friendship in the Philippines we have lost it all. Additionally, I thought our actual direct influence was very limited, and I felt very strongly that if it were not for the present U.S. and international interest in the election process there would never have been the news coverage that had developed. The Philippines certainly got a far fairer shake with the terrific news coverage that the media had given the election.
- 3) finally, that I believed Cory's impulsive damning of the U.S. Embassy was a cheap shot, worthy of a Khomeini, but not the future leader of the Philippines. She knew it would get press coverage, but she also had to know that the embassy couldn't really respond.

Mark took all this in and said he would make sure that the ideas were aired with Cory. At least he had had an American viewpoint, albeit a personal one. After he went back to the Aquino headquarters I took a last swing through the lobby bar and saw Guy and Stan Karnow, who waved me over. While we discussed the events of the day we were joined by Stanley Roth, who is Representative Stephen Solarz's aide and staffer. He was out to assess whether his boss should come out to Manila, or wait. The general consensus was to wait, since an ill-timed visit would only muddy the waters. His well-known anti-Marcos stand would surely complicate matters if he showed up too soon.

While the ballots were being assembled and deposited at the Municipal Halls, a further critical step in the election process was about to begin at the Namfrel Headquarters, at the COMELEC, and finally at the National Assembly.

The votes were now cast. An equally critical portion of the election was ahead. The counting.



## VI. THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

The day after the election began slow. Election returns would be coming in for several days, unlike an American election where you remain glued to the TV set as the returns come in. Here there was a tremendous sense of the anticlimactic. At the Aquino media room the impression was that although they had expected cheating all along, it seemed a greater indignity now that they were actually faced with it. The election returns came in steadily, if slowly, and there was growing evidence of massive fraud. Senator Lugar amended his initial statement and was now confirming that there was fraud and cheating throughout the election. The international media was just waiting for something to happen. There was a feeling of tense anticipation in the air.

Our luncheon meeting was with Inday Arcenas, niece of Vice Presidential candidate Doy Laurel. Stanford educated, she is extremely well spoken, and had a level-headed assessment of the situation. Inday was hopeful that they would overcome what looked to be a sure Marcos victory-- (through cheating). As we spoke I was somewhat alarmed at what seemed to be indications that there was less than perfect communication between the Aquino and Laurel staffs, and she confirmed this. Later I would make a point to tell Teddy of my observation, and though each side gave lip service to bringing the staffs together, it has not changed substantially following the victory.

I returned to the Cojuangco Bldg. for Cory's two o'clock press conference. The room was jammed, and full of TV cameras. The press spokesman, Rene Saguisag, made a few prefatory remarks, and then Lupita Kashiwahara stepped up to read Cory's prepared statement:

My fellow Filipinos,

I want to share with you the results of the votes counted thus far. I know that some of you are concerned because the COMELEC count is coming in suspiciously slow. Let me reassure you. Every report that comes in confirms my victory, the people's victory. So, to the people out there, who are courageously defending the ballot, I say, keep it up, make sure that no further cheating nibbles at our impressive lead. You are not fighting a defensive action, you are solidifying a sweeping victory. Do not believe the count being broadcast by the government controlled media. These are the lies of desperate men. Their ridiculous claim this morning that 24 million votes have been counted in their media poll count is propaganda, not journalism, and it is intended to condition the people to a theft of the election. Well, it won't work.

Of the 6 million votes so far counted by NAMFREL, Radio Veritas, and our own opposition poll watchers, I am leading with 3,469,714 votes. Mr. Marcos is trailing badly with 2,569,498 votes. So I already lead by 900,000 votes. No wonder the COMELEC is taking so long counting the votes! I said it before, numbers will break the Marcos machinery of fraud. Even the COMELEC count has me leading.

Doy Laurel is also well ahead of Tolentino. Despite all the cheating, fraud and terrorism that has taken place, my experts are projecting that I will win by 55% of the vote. This is confirmed by an independent foreign media projection which arrived at a similar projection a few hours ago. Not all the Marcos fraud and terrorism has been able to stand up to our landslide victory. And believe me, he pulled out all the stops. I said it was going to be a battle of attrition: our numbers against his cheating and terrorism. Well, we got the numbers and we have beaten him.

We are winning in 10 regions of the country. Marcos is leading only in region 1 and 2 in the north. But even there I am vigorously chopping off his lead. The once solid Marcos North has gone soft under the force of People Power.

I want to thank the brave people of Mindanao. Region XI has given me a lead of 249,938 to 168,273 for Marcos. In Regions 10 and 9, I lead by almost a third. I have two times the number of votes of Marcos in Region 12. Marcos has tried to break our overwhelming support in the South and he has failed.

We must also salute the bravery of our supporters here in Manila and in Tarlac, who stood firm in the face of extreme intimidation and ballot stuffing.

In the National Capital Region, I am leading by 274,889. In Iloilo and in Cebu city, I have swept the Marcos machine aside. In Pasig, fraud and intimidation ate into my projected lead of 80-20 and the final count gives me 60-40.

We are winning. It is a glorious victory. Stay strong. Be vigilant and stay with the ballot boxes. Marcos won't stop trying but we won't stop fighting. A new Philippines was born last night because we all stood firm. To Mr. Marcos, I say: With much sacrifice and suffering, the people have given me their mandate. I shall protect it with my life.

This statement acknowledged one of the most crucial problems that had developed, the inordinate delay in the COMELEC count. They lagged far behind NAMFREL and the government-sponsored media poll count. This was viewed with alarm. The supposition was that the slowness would both condition the public to a Marcos continuation in power and allow time for more sophisticated ballot substitution/numbers manipulation. Senator Lugar made a statement acknowledging the delay in the count with concern.

My next stop was to the Philippine Cultural Center to observe the COMELEC in operation. The building was outwardly impressive, as was the entire COMELEC setup. There were banks of gleaming personal computers, all with uniformed operators, and everything was very Madison Avenue. It provided a glossy, polished image for the media. Following the tour of the COMELEC facility I was invited by Inday to ride along with her group as they investigated potential election incidents.

We arrived at a safehouse in Makati and had a quick dinner, cooked by a volunteer. There were four or five others in the condo and each was involved with the grassroots support of the Laurel campaign. The driver and

I left in a hurry after getting a call that there was suspected trouble in a particular school district. We jumped in the car, which had been radio equipped, and while he drove he told me about their code system. It was a simple code based on a numerical scale, then modified with various conditioning statements. For example, a code 7 Winter would express a fairly serious confrontation requiring personnel backup including firearms. We proceeded to a parking lot to await the convergence of other cars, and after about 30 minutes four cars and crews arrived. They were both male and female, and uniformly young; Inday and I were probably the oldest. The first alert we received was to a school which had been used as a polling place. The report was that "goons"--the accepted word for pro-Marcos enforcers--were preparing to cause trouble with the Namfrel volunteers that were there. In reality, there was utter peace and tranquility at the school, and it was to be that way all night as we travelled about the city. The only location where we saw real tension was at the Makati Municipal Hall, and here the clergy--low ranking nuns and priests--had surrounded the building the ballots were being stored in. There were literally thousands of people up and in the streets, and there were many documented incidences of violence and of ballot boxes being snatched by "goons". None occurred where we happened to be. I was dropped off at the Manila Hotel at about 1:30 in the morning, and the others continued their vigil. They would be tired in the morning.

The next morning Dr. Buss gave Stan Karnow an on-screen interview for his special. Afterwards we went to Santo Domingo cathedral, in which mass was celebrated by Bishop Teodoro Bacani. The cathedral, in Quezon City, was a mass of humanity. Every seat was taken. Every square foot of standing room and any horizontal surface had at least one person occupying

it. The crowd was thrilled because Cory was to come, but in the end it was Doy Laurel who arrived, in his characteristic green polo shirt--the official color of his UNIDO party. The crowd was jubilant, and he was clearly in his element. He and his wife Celia glowed in the limelight.

The Bishop gave a very lighthearted sermon, wholly political in nature. In relating how a nun had used her own body to protect the sanctity of a ballot box he quipped, "...it is lucky that she didn't find it necessary to protect my body--I might have lost my sanctity!" The crowd loved it.

Leaving the mass early we travelled to Baclaran Cathedral where Cardinal Sin would celebrate the Thanksgiving mass. He was less lighthearted, and spoke continuously and clearly on the need to remain free from violence. His concern was that the pro-Cory forces avoid initiating violence. There was a common feeling that this was all the excuse that Marcos would need to come in swinging.

Cory did show for this mass, and the crowd was hysterically happy. The everpresent, "Corree-Doy, Corree-Doy", filled the air and everywhere there were smiles, yellow t-shirts and dresses, and children.

At 8:00 P.M. on February 9 the International Observer mission held their end-of-trip press conference at the Manila Hotel. The statement was given by the Irishman, Mr. Hume. He was adept with the audience of professional journalists, never allowing himself to be led in a direction other than that of his own choosing. The group's prepared statement was quite strong, and they were unequivocal in their identification of and distaste for the "observed, massive election fraud committed by the ruling party".

This would put the Lugar people in a somewhat easier position. Now that the precedent had been set it would be easier to observe something that the U.S. administration might not have wanted to acknowledge initially. The

Lugar press conference was the following morning. Some of the members of the Lugar team were sitting in front of me at this press conference. A woman joked to the two men with her that it would take a hell of a lot of work to get a statement out by morning, since they could not even agree on what they had seen. I suspect that they had a long night.

There wasn't a seat in the house the next morning. There were two microphones set up on opposite sides of the audience for questions following the statement. In fact, when the Lugar group did arrive most of them looked beat, and probably had little trouble sleeping on the plane when they left, immediately following the conference.

Senator Lugar read the statement, and it was clearly a compromise. He delivered it well. It started with a very innocuous couple of paragraphs describing their mission, the way in which they split into groups, and then went into a very positive recanting of all the good democratic actions that they had seen being taken. The only controversial part was included in the following two paragraphs:

Sadly, however, we have witnessed and heard disturbing reports of efforts to undermine the integrity of that process, both during the voting and vote counting process which is still underway. Even within the last twenty-four hours, serious charges have been made in regard to the tabulation system.

The count is at a critical moment. We share the concern, expressed to us by government election officials and citizen monitors, that the remainder of the COMELEC and NAMFREL Quick Count Operations proceed to a credible conclusion without further delay. We join all Filipinos of good will in deploring all incidents of election related violence and intimidation.

Following this bit of carefully worded diplomacy it went on to a really soft section on the friendship between our two countries, and on the hopes for a

good election in the end. Not the concise and direct stuff of which the International Team's report was made. This would not be particularly satisfactory to the majority of Filipinos, nor to President Reagan. It was simply too wishy-washy. I hoped that there was something substantial to tell the President. He couldn't do much policy formulation with this statement.

As we left the press conference we ran into an old "Philippine hand", Al Ravenholt. Stories abound of Al's exploits; now he is a planter down south, although his business card lists him as a correspondent. Whatever other connections he may have--government intelligence or otherwise--are speculation, but he is interesting and extremely well informed on the Philippines. An observation by Al made a strong impression on me. From looking at his own area he noted that the NPA is strong in areas that do not have any local government structure. Not just bad government, or weak government--no government. And according to him there are vast areas of the country that are in just such a situation. This was a new consideration for me. In my previous study of the NPA I had assumed that they stayed up in the mountains during the day and came down at night when the CHDF<sup>1</sup>, barangay captains, and army were in. Al pointed out that in much of the country there is no CHDF, no barangay captain, and certainly no reliable army. In these areas it is the NPA itself which provides social justice and

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<sup>1</sup>Civilian Home Defense Forces, a civilian para-military organization organized under President Marcos' direction. They were issued arms, little training, and unsupervised authority. Much of the violence reported by innocent civilians has been laid at the CHDF's door. President Aquino reduced their numbers by 1/3 prior to her first 90 days and intends to disband them altogether. The military has been largely unsuccessful, however, in recalling their arms.

limited medical attention. And the people literally have no alternative. Clearly this will be a big challenge to the new government.

The afternoon was spent at the family home of Helen Benitez, one of the foremost women in Filipino politics, and a National Assemblyperson. We were joined by Jolly Benitez' wife and Mrs. Benitez' godson, Boy, a banker. Jolly was one of Mrs. Marcos' closest worker/strategists, and the real author of most of Imelda's famous "thoughts on life". Later we were joined by retired Colonel Anthony Quinto, and Emma Valeriano. This was definitely Marcos country. Lunch was an interesting discussion, mostly centering on the election, but also touching on the future "after Marcos wins", and the probability of needed reforms. I brought up the question of a Marcos/Laurel ticket--at this point in the count very much a possibility, and they were very receptive to the idea. Obviously, they thought Laurel was someone that they could work with--one of their own. And of course Marcos would still be on top so that the status quo would remain.

The National Assembly was opening that afternoon to officially count the tally sheets, and "legally" decide who would be the next president. Mrs. Benitez had arranged seats for us in the gallery. The session opened amidst a radically polarized audience. Speaker of the Assembly Yniguez cautioned the crowd that there would be little tolerance of rowdy behavior or noise; this was greeted with grumbling and hoots. As the session got underway the various assemblymen came in and immediately began to caucus.

There was loud applause from the Marcos side when Imee Marcos, the President's daughter, and an assemblywoman, came into the hall. She is young, and wearing a bright red dress, stood out amongst the dark business suits. She turned and waved to her side of the audience with evident self-confidence. As the Speaker brought things to order the rules were



explained. Challenges and protests began immediately. The first major piece of business was whether protests would be taken precinct by precinct, as the opposition members wanted, or together at the end, as the pro-government forces wanted.

As the opening dragged on and on we slipped out.

At evening's end Emma and I stopped for a nightcap prior to calling it a night. As if by some pre-arranged signal she began delivering a message, and she made it clear that she was speaking for Imelda. She told me in very direct terms, with a clear implication whose ears this was for (the U.S. government via Dr. Buss), that the key element in the acceptance of a Marcos/Laurel ticket by the U.S. would be for there to be immediate improvement and change in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. To accomplish that, General Ver would have to be removed. This in turn, would require Imelda's direct intervention. The First Lady would get President Marcos to send the General to the U.S. in a retired status if the United States would find a job for him that would be sufficiently face-saving. One possibility mentioned was as a security consultant. (Where I thought, to Nicaragua?) General Ver would obey orders, Emma told me, and then Ramos could move up and make the reforms that the U.S. wanted.

This was clearly and unmistakably a political offer, and after we called it a night, I immediately went to my room to write it down in detail. The next morning I relayed the message but Dr. Buss was apparently insufficiently impressed with the idea to pass it on to the embassy, and it died. Just as well. It was interesting to see Imelda trying to find her own way out of the increasingly sticky situation she and the President were in.

The morning found me enroute the Mandarin Hotel for a breakfast meeting. We passed a slum section, and the contrast with Makati was

startling. The driver informed me that this was the Alikbayan Compound, but that he had never been there and did not know much about it. Even passing by the twisted walkways, and the cardboard and plywood houses was unforgettable, as were the people, people without expression in adulthood, but with the smiles and laughter as children that made the scene even sadder. This scene was good preparation for our breakfast conversation, for over the starched linen, the silver, china, and crystal we talked of economics, and of reform.

The breakfast guest was Flor Orendin, and like Ditos, he was associated with the Ministry of Human Settlements. From the start he was very open about the failure of the Ministry to address problems that have a real impact on the people that need the housing programs. During this far-reaching discussion some of the points that he aired were:

- the Philippines should look north towards Taiwan as an example, for the Philippines has even greater natural resources, and equal manpower. Being island nations there is enough similarity that if they could achieve successful industrialization, the Philippines should be able to.
- the coconut and sugar industries should be diversified so as not to be handcuffed to the vagaries of the world pricing system.
- let the government act as the catalyst for business, not the business itself.
- major exports which are value added at a rate of 15-20% are a major problem.
- possible growth industries of interest would be the conversion of copra to diesel fuel, and sugar to polyethylene.
- the Philippines should look within the Pacific Rim for investment. In particular both immigration and foreign investment policies should be loosened. Possible sources of income for the Philippines might be foreign retirees. Orendin cited a ratio in monetary expenditure within the country indicating that 5000 retirees spend as much as 1,000,000 tourists. People that might be induced to retire in the Philippines are

the upper classes in the PRC, and workers from Japan. Arrangements could possibly be made through Japanese corporations for their cradle-to-grave employees who would consider such a move (incentives could be offered as a result of the savings the company would have in retirement in the Philippines vs. Japan.) Other sources of non-traditional investment capital were persons emigrating from Hong Kong prior to 1997, and those in Taiwan looking for new places to put venture capital .

- hoping against hope, he offered the observation that more markets were needed than aid, and that if Philippine companies were guaranteed a percentage of the U.S. market it would be of great utility. We assured him that there was presently little chance of getting that through.

His final statement could have been the economic epitaph of the Marcos regime. "There's free enterprise available as long as you are ready to pay for it..."

Our next appointment was with the President and owner of the Liberty Flour Company, and an ex-Secretary General of the Chamber of Commerce, Felix Maramba, Jr.. An avowed oppositionist, Felix was both candid and humorous. He also had very sound and workable ideas for improvement to the private sector in the Philippines. Among his ideas were the funneling of USAID funds into the Philippine Volunteers Foundation. These funds would be utilized by the volunteers in providing technical assistance from Manila, and would go to the outlying rural areas in small and medium industries. He spoke of last year's Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) project theme, which was regional development within the Philippines. It consisted of indigenous assistance to small projects, such as crocodile farming, integrated meat processing, and leather manufacture. This work led to the development of the PCCI Foundation for Economic Development, which will carry on these programs. Another PCCI initiative was the National Economic Development Agency, which the USAID funded after demonstration of viability by PCCI. Felix felt strongly that agriculture

in the Philippines was lagging its potential, and that, "...no government agency has the know-how or interest in startup, marketing, and financing of agriculture, only production...", so the PCCI was setting up a conference to address those problems with an eye toward practical and achievable solutions.

I was most impressed with his grassroots approach towards solution of problems. This seemed to be the most successful strategy, as the infrastructure is insufficient to support large amounts of money in big projects. Furthermore it is the large projects which provide the rakeoff that make the cronies rich. Felix cited crony Bobby Ongpin (brother of Cory Aquino's advisor Jimmy Ongpin) as loving the large international project, with its glamour. But where steel mills and dams offered little to the average Filipino, Felix pointed out that privatization of small and medium enterprises would provide jobs and money in circulation. Additionally:

- he would like to see the Center for International Private Enterprise fund a \$US150,000 grant to develop Chambers of Commerce throughout the Philippines.
- there should be improvement in the local purchase practices of Clark and Subic. Most of the necessary supplies for the large bases are U.S. made goods which are shipped to the Philippines. They would far prefer to see this procured from the local economy. This would help far more than would direct aid, which is siphoned off by high level corruption.
- with the present system there is no way to service the \$2 billion per annum interest on the country's \$27 billion debt.
- even if you had good ideas it was impossible to get direct access to President Marcos; you had to go through either Bobby Ongpin or Caesar Virata.
- small projects are the most effective precisely because they are too small for the crony's to notice, take control of, and thus screw up.
- prior to Marcos the usual front end profit looked at by those putting up venture capital (for buildings, etc.) was 5 %. Now it is 50%.

- aid should be run as the Australians run it. Administer it yourself. If you can't do that, send it directly to private agencies, not through the government.
- most of those aligned with the NPA are bandits, drawn for economic reasons, not communists.
- coordination between local governmental officials and private industry is close, it is at the regional level that it breaks down.
- a total of 53 rural proposed projects were presented to General Ramos for approval. 27 were turned down under the general heading of "not law and order feasible". The 26 approved had no specific differences, nor was any explanation given.

A couple of his memorable statements were, "Small is beautiful", and "You can't be in business and politics at the same time". Felix has sound ideas, knows how to get them organized, and is seemingly honest. My hope that he be involved after the election process runs its course was granted. Felix is now hard at work on the aforementioned projects. He is very happy with his new President. He is less happy with the Minister of Finance.

This interview had taken us up to lunch time. When we arrived at the PCI Bank we took a private elevator up to the executive dining room, The Sign of the Anvil, named after the bank's logo. It's an impressive room, all mahogany, deeply carpeted, with lush foliage and a gleaming contemporary look. Looking about one would never suspect that the economy was in a shambles. Waiting for us was our host, Dr. Placido Mapa Jr.. Dr. Mapa was the president of the Philippine National Bank (PNB), and has had a distinguished career in banking and government service. Among other things he had served as a past president of the World Bank. As we began the discussion he stated that he saw the major priorities in economics to be:

- 1) Trade and export increases.
- 2) Increased and diversified investment within the Philippines.
- 3) Improvement in the Bases Agreement, to allow for more "rental", and greater local purchasing.

Dr. Mapa was considerably more reserved than most of the people we had seen to date, and seemed the epitome of the careful banker. While agreeing that reforms were needed in general terms, he would not be drawn into declaring the present government at fault. In fact, he established a historical record of economic need that predated Marcos as Chief Executive. Likewise, he was not willing to give concrete suggestions for improvement, other than to say that crop diversification was needed, particularly with respect to sugar land, and that privatization would be difficult. In the choppy waters of international finance this man would provide a steady hand on the tiller no matter what storms should arise, but I had reservations about his imagination.

Following lunch, and at Dito's suggestion, he arranged to have us shown the PCI president's private office. An armed guard escorted us down, and we were let onto an entire floor done in a museum-like rough stone motif. The floors were covered in an expensive wool carpet, but the walls were hand-hewn stone. As we wandered through at least 2500 square feet of rambling, interconnected rooms in this distinctive motif we viewed hundreds of mounted trophy animals. Every few feet there was another, from small antelope heads to entire bears. It seemed that the president, Cesar Salamea, was quite a hunter, and in the small office that was tucked in the middle of all this there were blown up photographs of him with various

guides, animals and rifles. Outside the office door there was a small blank wall, and our host joked that among those going in to see the president on business the word was that the wall is reserved for the head of the one bringing bad news. It was all very impressive, but macabre.

In a strange counterpoint Ditos showed us another facility at the bank, this in the basement. Here they had built a beautiful, contemporary, and lavishly decorated chapel. On the wall as you enter the following bas relief exists:

*GOD  
ABIDE WITH US PCIBANKERS  
YOUR GRACE  
LIGHT FOR OUR MINDS  
STRENGTH FOR OUR WILLS  
  
LET US ALWAYS BE MINDFUL  
THAT WE ARE YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS  
  
ENTRUSTED WITH MISSIONS  
TO SERVE GOD AND COUNTRY  
WITH EXCELLENCE  
AND INTEGRITY  
AND LOVE.*

Stirring words, but they rang hollow, just as the modern, quietly flamboyant chapel seemed hollow. I could not help but compare the Alikbayan Compound of the morning with the hundreds of stuffed animals staring glassily into space a few stories above us. The people in the slums had much the same blank, unseeing eyes. There is so much to be done, and it is not all difficult, or a matter for the World Bank. A great deal could be accomplished if only those in positions of influence and wealth could see about them. Certainly there were substantial challenges within a few miles

of this bank. Travelling to Alaska to shoot a bear and drag it back to a bank in Manila seemed the ultimate in aloofness.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent independently, and after dressing for dinner we were picked up by Ditos for a dinner in a private club with some very special guests. Dinner was at the Nielsen Tower, a club that is in the old tower for the long-gone Manila airport, Nielsen Field. Inside it was all wood paneling, red velvet, and very quiet. No rabble here, or even any middle class. We were escorted into a private room, and the rest of the party joined us there. They were Mr. Prud Europa, a personal assistant of President Marcos, Judge Hector Donato, the President's financial advisor, and General Barrangan, Commander of the Presidential Security Command. This then was about as close to the Marcos inner circle as you could get.

After we sat down, having made the introductions, Ditos read a copy of a just-received Reagan statement. In it the U.S. president called for both sides to work together in trying to form a viable government. Further, it indicated that there was evidence of a strong two-party system in the Philippines, and that there had been clear indications of local support for both sides. This group seemed quite satisfied with the statement, which appeared to me to be carefully worded in an effort to remain clear of any real commitment. I was sure that it would not sit well with the Aquino people, as it really made the Lugar mission superfluous. In spite of the Senator's comments upon leaving the Philippines it seemed to have had little effect on the President.

Conversation was pretty much of a general nature for the majority of the evening. The Judge is an animated and outgoing man, the General just the opposite. We tried to draw the General into a discussion on the insurgency, the NPA, and military needs. His stiff military bearing never



slipped an inch, and he was quite sure that the NPA could be defeated in less than a year, if they just received the Presidential go-ahead and adequate communications/ logistical equipment from the U.S. No other help needed or desired. When I posed a question on the viability of additional helicopters he initially deferred to the Judge, who asserted that the answer was in schools and roads. When these were in place the army could respond in a timely fashion, and the government could fight the ignorance and poverty that were the root causes of the insurgency. The General was not of the same mind in this, and with a wave of his hand assured us that NPA growth was the result of dedicated communist recruitment. I then asked him if helicopters weren't perfectly suited to this type of warfare. Possibly sensing a potential good deal--for they didn't know why we were "really" there--the General roused himself to very forcefully insist that new helicopters would be the ideal way of fighting the guerillas, and that the Army would definitely be interested in acquiring some. He was less impressive in addressing himself to matters outside his own area of expertise--which was protecting the President and Malacanang Palace. I asked him what he thought were the regional/strategic implications of the Soviet buildup in Cam Ranh Bay, and he never did answer the question, just changed subjects. Other items that the group discussed were:

- the role of the Philippine Navy: not much really, which was reflected in their low priority in the budget process. They allegedly have done a good job in restricting gun smuggling.
- the U.S. bases: definitely a key to regional stability and the maintenance of the balance of power.
- President Marcos: the only one that can effectively fight the NPA, as his own war experience allowed him to conduct the overall campaign. (This was the General's point.) When I asked if, in fact, the general staff was not the informational base for decision-making in the war against

insurgency, not the Chief Executive, the General was stuck. He didn't want to underrate his own importance, but he also didn't want to lose the point he was making. He solved the problem by not answering the question.

He asserted that when President Marcos was announced as having been reelected, the Ilocanos (the President's own ethnic group) would lead the resignation of the cabinet in a show of faith, allowing the President to keep those that he wanted.

Shortly after dessert the General said goodbye, claiming that he had to get back to his post. I have no real way of assessing his influence on the others, but after he left the Judge, who had been fairly quiet, made a staggering change in his position. Dr. Buss opened the conversation with four themes, which he posed as questions:

- 1) What was the President's view of himself--did he have a sense of his role in history/how he would be remembered, and did he worry about this?
- 2) Was there anyone in the President's family who could follow him--any sons, daughters, or sons-in-law that were capable of carrying out the family line in power?
- 3) What should be done first if the President received his mandate to remain in office?
- 4) What could the U.S. do?

Remember that we considered ourselves to be in the company of the most dedicated of Marcos supporters possible, and conversations subsequent to this evening demonstrated that this was not an erroneous assumption. As the Judge, who was now very clearly the "senior" Filipino in the room, answered the first question I thought he had misstated himself in relative unfamiliarity with English. When he repeated himself in clarification his

statement was staggering in it's implication. His response was that when the history of the Philippines was written it would contain just two lines on Marcos:

- 1) that he was the man who imposed martial law, illegally and in the absence of any real communist threat, and that
- 2) everything he did afterwards was a failure, specifically the New Society.

He went on to say that a third line was looming--that

- 3) he had failed to recognize that reforms were mandatory after not getting any mandate from the people. He asserted that after Marcos did win--the implication being that this was assured--he would get only "peanuts" in the electoral difference, no more than 1 or 1 1/2 million votes out of 26 million.

These statements were made with such vehemence, such emotion, that I was incredulous. As I listened I said to myself that Marcos was finished. If the people that were closest to him, and very highly placed in the KBL, were this angry, and this demoralized, then the KBL would self-destruct. The process was obviously well underway.

His outburst left the table totally silent for a few moments, and I was watching Prud and Ditos. Both were uncomfortable, and were looking down at the table. Significantly, however, neither made any attempt to take an opposing view.

Judge Donato went on. He said that the President heard only "good" news, and that in keeping with Ilocano tradition a younger man must ask an elder's opinion of a matter prior to stating his own view, and thus the President always gave his ideas first, and no one would then contradict him, right or wrong. The Judge asserted that he knew two people who had the capability of approaching the President with the message that after re-election he must make the following reforms:

- 1) Fire the crooked, incompetent cabinet members/hangers-on around him

(I thought this an incredible statement from a self-admitted 20-year hanger-on...) He included the family in this category.

- 2) Free the media, especially television.
- 3) Get Imelda out of government. She was never supposed to have control over the President, she was not bright or astute enough, and she never had been.

These comments accurately reflected the viewpoint of the opposition, and were put both succinctly and emotionally. Coming from a man that was said to be in the absolute innermost circle of Marcos compadres it was an astounding commentary, and one that we were totally unprepared to hear. There was little to say other than to ask questions of clarification on the various points, and the evening ended shortly thereafter. As soon as Dr. Buss and I got into the car I made the following comments: 1) that I thought this was a stunning revelation, 2) that Ditos and Prud may have looked uncomfortable, but they didn't object, and 3) that Ditos had expedited every one of the interviews we had been having, and this evening in particular was no accident. The inclusion of the General, and his time of leaving was speculative, but in my view it had to be taken as important that we had been made available for this forum of extraordinary candor. My final comment was that I thought that this information was too hot, and too vital not to pass on, and that it should go to Ambassador Bosworth.

Dr. Buss was in total agreement.

The next day started with a breakfast meeting with Hezel Gacutan, and the discussion centered largely on the changes that were going to have to be made if the Philippines was going to avoid more serious problems. Hezel's agenda was as follows:

- Conversion of the media to private enterprises; insistence on impartiality.
- Reform of the Judiciary, and a free, non-partisan legal system.
- Creation of a true bipartisan or non-partisan Commission of Elections.
- Cleaning out of the Cabinet.
- Economic reform/privatization.
- Law and order.
- Creation of infrastructure to bring government to the outlying areas.

I found it interesting that since the election had occurred everyone was in agreement that there was immediate need for reform. Even President Marcos used the word reform, indicating a tacit understanding that the existing situation was rotten and needed revamping. My feeling was that those in government realized that they would probably win closely, and then only through deceit, and that they would have to make immediate and meaningful changes to keep the people out of the streets.

Our afternoon appointment was at the Sign of the Anvil with one of, if not the, leading economists in the Philippines, Jesus "Jess" Estanislao. The discussion started with a question. What is your overall feeling, now that the election has taken place? The answer: aggravation. His basic aggravation stemmed from the needless amount of manipulation that had taken place prior to and during the election, and the fraud that had been so widespread and expensive. He believed that if Marcos had just conducted an honest election, and spent more time on substantive issues instead of attacking Cory, that he would have won anyway. The following points were made by Estanislao:

- There had been an unprecedented level of "good citizen" involvement in the election.
- The public institutions had been the big losers in the campaign fraud.
- There was no valid reason for the delay in the COMELEC Operation Quick Count. There was a precedent for it in the Macapagal-Marcos election, and the count was done rapidly; the estimate turned out to be extremely close to the final tally. He had taken part in this earlier effort.
- The substance of the Lugar mission was correct, but the first statement was too quick and too positive, while the later statements were too negative.
- The great question post-election was, now what? He feared that the institutions necessary to remove the old guard were not available.
- Culturally Filipinos root for the underdog (another inherited American value?) and Marcos made a serious tactical error when he blocked the media to the opposition.
- Marcos' attacking Cory as being soft on Communism was a cheap shot, as she had no record of any such position.
- There was so much paranoia and one-man control at the top that he could not even release national inflation figures without the President's O.K..
- It was vital that the media--particularly television--be made non-partisan.
- There would not be any substantive reform as long as President Marcos remained.
- The moderates in positions of governmental influence--like Ditos and himself--would try to cooperate with the government after a Marcos win, but most would not. Many upper level persons were having doubts about their ability to continue to work for Marcos. The example given was Alex Melchor, Governor of the Development Bank of the Philippines. Jess said that such people would present a lower and lower profile, and would, "cooperate the minimum possible, but won't be gung-ho."
- Many people saw the election as a test, and would have stuck with President Marcos had he given it an honest try.

In summary he said that there would be protest after Marcos was announced as the winner, and this would take the form of boycotting crony businesses, such as San Miguel beer, boycotting the crony press and TV, and by not paying taxes on April 15th. Further, he said that the President was aware of these possibilities. The point of such a non-violent protest would be to pressure the President to step down. Then a new election would be necessary. If the protest became violent, he saw the possibility of a coup d'etat becoming greater.

The point was made that the country and its electoral processes were stronger for having had the election, and that a boycott of the election, as some had called for, would not have produced these results. Jess was urged by Dr. Buss not to play into the President's hands by forcing the meeting of violence by violence. Instead, fight him with those things he did not understand: finance and industry, peaceful non-violent confrontation (non-Marxist). Jess was asked, "Could you work within a new Marcos government?" The answer was an unqualified no, that such a new government would have no legitimacy.

As far as the U.S. position, Jess asserted that we must take two paths: moral indignation and economic measures. He said that we would alienate the Filipino people for a "long, long time" if we were seen as propping up Marcos. No doubt in such a scenario Marcos would be very grateful, as that would be the only support he would get, but it would only buy us trouble in the long run. The longer that Marcos stayed in power, the larger the insurgency would grow.

Dr. Buss recalled that in Korea, when we wanted to topple Syngman Rhee, the signal was the halting of all military aid to the country. This

stiffened the students' backbone, and brought them to the streets. The U.S. Congress had already voted to halt aid if the election was not clean.

Returning to his personal involvement in the current crisis, Jess told us that there were two watersheds in his conversion to the anti-Marcos side: 1) he was appalled when the President made his statement that violence would be met with violence, because the government held all the cards, and 2) when the 30 women computer operators walked out of the COMELEC count. This had occurred the day before, and was in response to their being expected to accept rigged numbers in the incoming "vote". Jess was emphatic that the walkout was legitimate, and not a political ploy by either side. In answer to a query by Dr. Buss on the utility of a Philippine-American academic conference Jess was very enthusiastic. He named the following potential invitees to represent the Philippines:

Pepe Miranda--Univ. of the Philippines  
Jose Marivelas--representing the Left  
Rene Agissez--UNIDO  
Alex Melchor--representing the Right  
Cecil Buenaventura  
Roy Navarro--SGV  
Ed Angarra--NAMFREL and education  
Boy Herrera--NAMFREL and labor

As we left, Ditos told us that Jess is single, and a member of Opus Dei, an extremely committed element of the Catholic Church. Like others I had met, I hoped he would be able to serve in the future in a more influential post.

At 2:30 we attended the afternoon press conference at the Aquino headquarters. Press spokesman Rene Saguisag told the assembled journalists that Cory was biding her time until the National Assembly made it's proclamation of a winner. He then read a statement deploring the



murder of opposition figure Evelio Javier, killed in Antique. The murder had already been linked to National Assembly Majority leader and Marcos henchman Arturo Pacificador, and was the worst example of election violence to date.

This day had also seen the announcement of the sending of Ambassador Philip Habib to the Philippines by President Reagan. Cory released a statement acknowledging the visit, and it was fairly strong. She would welcome him, but could not forget that his last posting was to Lebanon. The implication seemed to be that he had little success there. In talking to Teddy Locsin it seemed that what they were really upset about was the supposition that Reagan was sending him to get Cory and Marcos to "kiss and makeup". Presumably after Marcos was announced the winner.

Campaign workers in the headquarters were furious. Teddy told us hotly that Cory would not see Habib when he came. Allegedly Cory had said, "the hell with all Americans!" in a fit of pique over what they saw as the mission of the Habib visit. We were particularly upset over this. What ensued was practically two hours with Dr. Buss, Teddy, and Mark Brown in an effort to defuse their anger and tell them something about the man. Ambassador Habib is a close personal friend of Dr. Buss' and it was somewhat providential that he was there.

What we tried to point out to them was that the Lugar mission had most likely returned with somewhat of a mixed report, as at least some of the delegates were at precincts where no fraud was observed. Since any statement that the American president makes has the potential of radically influencing events--by virtue of what it says or doesn't say--he must be extremely careful. That being the case, one could see that the statements that President Reagan had been making, which admittedly were non-

controversial, were an effort to maintain a holding pattern until he could get some solid, trustworthy information on which to base a plan of action. Then too it was known that there was a serious split between the White House and the State Department over Cory Aquino's abilities.

Philip Habib was the perfect man for this sort of mission. He is vastly experienced, has the respect of the world's leaders as a negotiator, and never takes a mission unless he has a clear understanding of his motives and his authority. He would be empowered to speak for the President, or he wouldn't have come. Further, and perhaps most importantly, Dr. Buss told Teddy and Mark--for Cory's ears--that Ambassador Habib absolutely could not abide Marcos personally. In the past several years he had had probably twenty trips to the Far East, during which he would normally have stopped in the Philippines several times. In every case he deferred coming because he would be expected to pay a courtesy call on Malacanang, and this he would not do.

This bit of background made a difference to the Aquino strategists, and I could see that they were reassessing their position. We went on to stress that it was absolutely vital that they not close the door on a friend as potentially powerful as the United States, and that it was critical that Habib get the real picture, and thus be in a position to convince President Reagan of what must be done. He must cut the ties to Marcos.

My feeling was, and I tried very hard to get it across, that if the U.S. showed support for Cory, or even withdrew support from Marcos, much of the KBL higher and middle level circles would defect. Should this occur, the structure propping Marcos up would crumble. This could precipitate his fall much faster than boycotts, etc.

It was vital to get across to Cory that the U.S. position was not yet firm, and that she needed to let Habib assess things firsthand. He could not do that if one side in the struggle would not see him. Dr. Buss finished with a plea--see him once at least. If you think you are getting the run-around, then walk out. But see him once. With this Teddy and Mark went back upstairs to see Cory.

She would see him.

We returned to the Manila Hotel and as we entered the lobby we were waved over to a table by Rey Gregorio, who was with about 7 or 8 of his friends, mostly university professors. I had to drop some things in my room, and when I returned Dr. Buss was gone. I sat next to Rey and asked him if he knew where Dr. Buss had disappeared to. A finger pointed through the glass that separates the bar from the Roma Ristorante Italian restaurant. Looking through, I spotted Dr. Buss at a table with several others, including Emma Valeriano. Then I noticed that the center seat at the table was taken by the First Lady, Imelda herself.

Suddenly several things became apparent: the three maitre 'd's, the body guards at the door to the restaurant, the pat-downs as people with reservations entered, and the large number of very high-ranking Army officials in the near vicinity. I laughed in wonderment at Dr. Buss' connections, and went on to have a drink and talk about the day's events. The table was split along Marcos/Aquino lines, but they were first and foremost friends and peers, and the banter was lively and very good natured. A few minutes later Emma came out into the lobby, looking for someone, and when she saw me came directly over, a smile on her face. "Come", she said, taking me by the arm, "you must meet the First Lady."

We waltzed by the guard and she escorted me up to the table, where she introduced me to the First Lady. Imelda looked me over politely, but very reservedly, as if to say, who is this person, and why is he here? Emma explained that I was here with Dr. Buss, (who was grinning at my centerstage position), and the First Lady indicated the only empty chair at the table and pronounced, "you must join us for dinner." Could one say no?

The table consisted of Emma, Dr. Buss, Roy Rowan from Fortune magazine, the wife of the Philippine Ambassador to Italy, the First Lady, and Paul Mountfort and Matt Freeman, of the Stone, Mountfort and Kelly PR firm. Shortly after I sat down, Paul Mountfort, who was very slick, in a 600 dollar suit, and manner to match, had to leave, and this left the place next to the First Lady empty. I moved over and filled it. Luckily none of the guards took offense at my initiative.

Dinner lasted five hours and consisted of five courses, two wines, capaccino, and "the world according to Imelda". The First Lady was, in a word, holding court. After sitting through this performance the word sycophant took on new meaning. It was undeniably fascinating, hearing all the stories and anecdotes for the first time, but as Dr. Buss later confirmed, it never changed, and quickly became tiresome. It was obvious that those in her circle had heard all of the stories many times, and they prompted her at appropriate times and laughed rather too loud and too long. Mrs. Marcos had a habit of telling most stories, and punchlines, two or three times, as if they were so clever that we would enjoy them several times in succession. They weren't, and we didn't.

She really had the patter down. Key phrases and concepts were delivered with a smoothness that can only come with practiced repetition. The same was true of her strategic/sociohistoric lectures. She gave me quite

an education on the pivotal role of the Philippines in the world, complete with charts, maps and graphs. These were drawn by her on a pad of paper that magically appeared as soon as she started down this conversational path. Three pens and markers were provided of different colors and widths, but all proved unsuitable, and a mass search by the guards ensued. Eventually they found one she liked. I had her sign the last masterpiece. Later Dr. Buss told me I should entitle it, "I earned this."

Some impressions drawn from the dinner:

- her pensiveness when discussing the President, whom she asserted was the most capable and far-seeing man in the world today.
- honest delight in telling of her negotiations with Muammar Khadaffy, who she labelled as "a momma's boy."
- imperious indulgence when a Scandanavian journalist literally barged his way into her presence, introduced himself (uninvited by Emma, whose function it was to do such things), and then went on and on about his need for an interview with her. Emma literally took him by the arm and dragged him out of the room.
- her genuine pleasure at hearing my observation that daughter Imee in person had surpassed any photographs I had seen of her, and how beautiful she was.

The overall impression I received, however, was one of detachment, as if she really wasn't totally with us. Dr. Buss said he thought she saw the sword of Damocles hanging over her head, and this may very well have been the case.

One can see that she must have been a figure of great beauty and charm at one time, but that time is past, and she looked to me to be the product of too much of the good life. She was still mentally sharp, and no doubt dangerous when threatened, but I did not think she was a match for Cory. Imelda seemed to me to be out of touch with reality, or had lied to herself and the President for so long that she could no longer distinguish the

truth. She stated to me that NAMFREL and UNIDO had cheated and were trying to steal the election.

She was practically rabid on the subject of the "clerical fascists"--of whom Cardinal Sin was the chief troublemaker. Repeatedly she referred to her countrymen as, "my little people." She was visibly agitated on the subject of Mrs. Aquino. The audacity of this Mrs. Aquino, thinking she could run the country. "Imagine--a housewife!!!" Her final comment on the election was that the people had been cheated, not by Marcos, but by those who would cheat the Philippines out of his leadership. It was an incredible evening, and it ended for our table at 1:30 in the morning. As we got up to say goodbye a group of men came to take our places, Rey among them. Imelda said now it was time to see "her boys." Rey later told me they were released from post-campaign strategy at 4:30 A.M.

The next day, the 13th, we met with Doy Laurel. The meeting was in a study in the back of the Laurel home, and seated at the table were Inday and myself, Dr. Buss, Vice Presidential candidate Laurel, his wife Celia, his sister, a son-in-law, and ex-Vice President of the Philippines Manny Pelaez.

The meeting started off with Doy noting that their perception of the U.S. attitude was that Reagan wanted to solve the problem in the Philippines simply, and was saying, "why don't you guys kiss and makeup." We were back to the Habib mission again. Doy went on to say that if that was the attitude of Reagan and Habib, then Habib would fail. Why?

- 1) the U.S. must be more definitive, and realize that this is a decision-breaking point for the Philippines. To date, the Reagan statements had been platitudes, and the Filipino people would no longer sit for platitudes.
- 2) the close relationship between our two countries could easily change.
- 3) the hard evidence was available on the election rigging, but they felt it

should not be necessary to close the book on Marcos, the U.S. should recognize him for what he is. And has been.

As to what the U.S. should do, it came down to deciding where we stood. The fight was between the Filipino people and the Marcos regime. We had to publicly choose, and choose carefully.

If the election announcement was for Marcos as expected, there was every expectation that he would not be able to govern effectively. To "assist" in this decline in efficiency there would be bank strikes, work slowdowns, black outs, noise barrages, tax withholding, general strikes, and boycotts. In other words, civil disobedience. The dilemma that the U.S. found itself in was that it must either:

- 1) do nothing, and Marcos would continue. Things would worsen at an accelerated pace, or
- 2) do something, and risk being criticized for intervention. There was the possibility that even if the best of outcomes was achieved, the intervention angle would negate the good.

Basically, then, Reagan had to pick: Marcos, the Moderates, or the Leftists.

Dr. Buss asked Doy about his chances of winning, and he conceded that there was speculation that a Marcos/Laurel victory might emerge. This was a problem for him, and he first stated that he would honor the mandate of the people. I then asked him specifically if he would serve under Marcos, and in answer to the direct question he said, "I will not serve under Marcos." This still left the question of which was stronger, the mandate of the people, or "I will not serve under Marcos."

Vice President Pelaez stated that in his opinion the best thing for Ambassador Habib to do was to tell Marcos to concede, and then work on Tolentino, offering him asylum in the U.S..

Their bottom line was that Marcos could not govern. He would not have any legitimacy, and should not expect the people to adhere to the law. Furthermore, if he continued in power he would create enough new communists that eventually they would take over. No one wanted to see that. Should it happen people would never again trust an election.

The son-in-law spoke up to say that already educated middleclass youth were organizing assassinations of people like COMELEC Chairman Jaime Opinion. No one looked askance at him, and it was just another indication of the extent of feelings there.

Dr. Buss then reviewed these points and went on to give Doy the same reasoning for seeing Ambassador Habib that we had given Teddy the day before. Doy showed us a statement he had ready to release that afternoon. In it he said he would not meet with Habib. He told us that it had been written in response to telegrams he had received from six of his regional campaign chiefs advising him not to see Habib. After listening he ripped the statement up. Once again it seemed as if the timing of our visit could not have been much better.

I was impressed that this was very much a family affair. Often the wife or sister made comments, and they were given equal weight. This was also true of Inday. I had also been impressed with Doy's apparent commonsense and the organisation that appeared to be at work. There did seem to be that breakdown in communication between Doy's and Cory's people.

Prior to our leaving Dr. Buss made a good point. When Ambassador Habib saw President Marcos he would be presented with a detailed brief on the legality of the election and on all incidences of fraud perpetrated by the opposition. (Whether there were any or not.) It seemed only good planning



to have something concrete and unemotional to give Ambassador Habib outlining how the government cheating had been accomplished. It did not have to be discussed with him, just presented for him to look at later. There must be lots of opposition lawyers around, put some of them to work. Vice President Pelaez replied that it was an excellent idea, and that he would take care of it.

Lunch was with Alex Melchor, and Inday dropped us at the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), where Alex is the bank's Governor. I knew Alex only by reputation, because he was an Annapolis graduate. His ties to Marcos went way back, but he was characterized as basically an honest, hard working man by most accounts. According to Ditos, Alex had been Executive Secretary to President Marcos in 1972, and it was he that actually oversaw the implementation of martial law. He found that the government was so corrupt and inefficient that he started planting people he personally knew in positions throughout the various ministries, at middle levels. He did this in order to complete projects that he was working on. Basically he just wanted to get things done. Unfortunately, this was interpreted by the First Lady and Kokoy Romualdez, her brother, as being a method of preparing for an eventual takeover. They considered him a CIA plant to bump off Marcos.

One of his major positions was head of the Philippine Aerospace Corporation, which he put into operation under the President's authority. The President directed him to make helicopter gunships, and he put two together, being primarily interested in developing an indigenous aircraft manufacturing capability. The First Lady seized on the gunships as proof that he was preparing to storm Malacanang, and Alex was called into Marcos to account for these accusations. He played them down, but apparently

Marcos wanted to clip his power, while leaving him in his position. Allegedly Alex said no, just abolish the position. Subsequent to this he became the Director of the Asian Development Bank, and then the Governor of the DPB. He had served as a special envoy to the United States, and in 1983-1984 was the President of General Services.

Lunch was served in his office, at the largest table I had ever seen. It was at least twelve feet across and forty feet long. There were six guests, three on each side, and there was lots of space between us. The conversation was the standard election variety. Alex was absolutely convinced that reforms had to come immediately if Marcos stayed in power. He told us that his wife and daughters were very pro-Cory. He struck me as essentially honest, immensely capable, and as a person with a wealth of personal experience. After the luncheon Dr. Buss made the suggestion to Ditos that Alex would make the perfect Philippine Ambassador to the United States. Instead, after the following remarkable week, and Cory's victory, Alex accepted her offer to be the Philippine Ambassador to the USSR.

Our next stop was at the U.S. Embassy, where we gave Mary Carlin a quick brief on what we had heard from the various people, and our efforts to calm Cory/Doy and urge them to see Ambassador Habib. We gave her our impressions of the meeting with Laurel, and the absolute necessity for Ambassador Habib to get the straight word as early in his trip as possible. Dr. Buss made an offer/request to stay past his scheduled departure date to speak to him if possible. Mary said she would pass this on to Ambassador Bosworth immediately.

At dinner later that night Dawn Fowler told us how she had observed military helicopters flying over their neighborhood in formation, and thinking this to be unusual, called Dennis. He got in a car at the embassy and

followed them to Malacanang, where they appeared to be making practice emergency extractions. Interesting.

It had now been a week since the election. Ditos Bondoc was in agreement that there was much dissention at the top of the present leadership, and the KBL was on shaky foundations. We made the observation that there were presently three groups of people with choices to make: the Marcos group, the Cory Group, and the Laurel group, and it was important to differentiate between them. Once again we reviewed our observations on the apparent distance between Cory's people and Laurel's.

Lunch was with Rey Gregorio, and this was the first time we had seen each other since the night with the First Lady. He told us that he made a suggestion to the First Lady that she disestablish the Ministry of Human Settlements, and split it's funding up to the other ministries that are in place. In this way perhaps more of the money would trickle down to the needy. Apparently she didn't comment on his plan, and judging from her glowing comments to me on her many good works, I seriously doubted that she would ever willingly disestablish her power base.

Rey made the point that it was time that she went back to being a sweet, pretty, symbolic First Lady. She wasn't elected, and it was ridiculous for her to be the Governor of MetroManila, which she was. Dr. Buss and Rey were in agreement that the time was ripe to implement reforms, not prepare new studies of what needs to be done. There were scores of well done studies gathering dust.

Later that night I decided to see a film. The movie Delta Force was playing at the huge Luneta theater, and I purchased a ticket in the balcony. The movie was very much an anti-terrorism "Rambo", in which the might of America was able, through superior moral fortitude, intelligence, technology,

and sheer courage, to overcome the vicious and cruel Third World terrorists. Chuck Norris was decked out in black stretch nylon, and every member of his team was adorned with a patch of the American flag on their sleeves.

With the current vacillation in the Reagan administration over Marcos I thought that it would be very interesting to observe the Filipino reaction to this movie. It might provide a very good clue as to the depth of any anti-American feeling in the city. I needn't have worried. Chuck was everyone's hero, and the Americans were roundly cheered as they kicked the inept Palestinians around.

Much later that night I got a call from Teddy and Mark Brown, into their second or third drink as I joined them, and somewhat down. I think they were getting worn out by the campaign, and specifically by the waiting that was now going on while the National Assembly played with the numbers. They had scheduled a large rally at the Luneta for Sunday the 16th, and earlier had made the decision to have Cory publicly proclaimed as the President, with opposition members of the National Assembly in attendance. I had been opposed to this because I thought that it left Marcos with no options except a crackdown, and possibly her arrest. Now Teddy told me that the rally would not include the proclamation. She would initiate the civil disobedience program, and would refer to the recent Bishop's pastoral letter calling for the same. There would be only two speakers, Doy and Cory. I told them that I thought it was extremely important that Cory put herself over as a statesperson, and remain measured, dignified and powerful, not emotional or strident. Other nations were sizing her up as a potential leader, and as someone that they had to decide to deal with or not. A key person would be Ambassador Habib, and he would be looking. I

thought, to see if she was the future leader of 57,000,000 people that the U.S. could work with and depend on to adequately represent those people.

We spoke of the many clergy figures on her advisory staff, most notably Father Joaquin Bernas, and I asked Teddy about their willingness to step down should she assume the Presidency. He told me that they were already making jokes about working themselves out of jobs, and that he didn't think it would be a real problem. And as it turned out, he was right.

The following morning we had a discussion with Carl Lande, and Carl was very positive that the Reagan administration had to make a strong statement, and now. He thought it should include the following:

- 1) The elections were witnessed, and included massive fraud by the government.
- 2) The Filipino people have expressed their choice for Cory, and
- 3) Marcos can no longer govern effectively.

In Carl's own words the U.S. needed to make, "a bold step, for tremendous gains." We had to derecognize the Marcos government. "Equivocation is seen as betrayal." Then followed a discussion on the merits of various strategies of backing away from Marcos. The announced suspension of further military aid was still his favored method.

Dr. Buss and I had a subsequent appointment at the embassy with Scott Hallford, the Counselor for Political Affairs. He is a very likeable person, and has that undeniable spark of intelligence in his eye. He told us that they had learned that President of the University of the Philippines Ed Angarra and Cory advisor Jaime Ongpin were among those who found themselves disenfranchised in the election. The embassy had discovered that Ronnie Zamora had masterminded the project for Marcos, and it involved a very sophisticated computer study of voting patterns from the

1984 national election. This established the names and areas targeted for deletion from the registration rolls.

Hallford then outlined the following scenarios that he saw possible:

- 1) a military coup that Marcos would engineer himself. The military would then split and he would control the loyalists in power from behind the scenes.
- 2) a valid military coup as a result of the Cory rallies/civil disobedience.
- 3) trying to make do with Marcos as had been the status quo. A continued deterioration in the Philippines, increase of the NPA, decline in the economy, and the further radicalization of the middle class.
- 4) Ambassador Habib expediting an agreed-upon nullification of the election. Cory agreeing to it, with the understanding that Marcos would step down in 1987.

As to the U.S. actions necessary, Scott agreed that "equivocation is no good." He mused that dealing with a dictator was acceptable as long as the man kept his end of the bargain, that is, maintained a stable government. Marcos had lost that capability. It seemed that even in the world of realpolitik Marcos had gone too far. Hallford agreed that it would be good if Dr. Buss could see Ambassador Habib, and would let him know what they could arrange.

When Ambassador Habib did arrive they met. Dr. Buss had thought long and hard on the message that he would deliver. It would have to be short, direct, and carry the essence of what we had seen. What he finally arrived at was this:

- 1) Marcos was finished.
- 2) Cory Aquino was a force in her own right, and not just an opposition figurehead.
- 3) It wasn't over yet.

Truer words were never spoken. It wasn't over by a long shot.

## VII. THE REVOLUTION

By Friday, the fourteenth of February, election returns from 97% of the precincts had been tabulated by the National Assembly. They gave Marcos 53.8 % of the vote, with 10,184,710 votes to Mrs. Aquino's 8,731,999, or 46.2 %. The NAMFREL count was reporting only 67.5% of the precincts, but it held Mrs. Aquino ahead 52.4% to Marcos' 47.6%.

Perhaps the most telling statistic of all was the vote in Manila. Within the city, which was certainly the most politically active area of the country, and a known center of opposition strength, only some 2.5 million of 4.3 million possible votes had been cast. The conservative estimates were that at least a million voters had been effectively disenfranchised.

As the results became known the Church took an unprecedented step. The bishops released a statement at a news conference in which they said that a government which "assumes or retains power through fraudulent means has no moral basis". They urged all Filipinos to "a non-violent struggle for justice." The moral basis for civil disobedience had been laid, next would come the political basis.

Shortly before midnight Saturday the National Assembly finished its dirty work. As the opposition members of the Assembly filed out in protest of the tabulation Assembly Secretary-General Antonio de Guzman read the proclamation reinstating Marcos as President. Tolentino was announced as the winner of the Vice-Presidential race. The final figures gave Marcos 53.8% of the vote, winning by a margin of 1,515,481 votes. Daughter Imee led the packed Marcos house in cheers, and the chanting of "Marcos pa rin!", his campaign slogan. Indeed, it did seem like it might still be Marcos.

Two hours after the proclamation, Ambassador Habib arrived for his briefings. Dr. Buss met Air Force One at the runway. Had Marcos presented Habib with a *fait accompli*?

Cory held her largest rally since the election the following Sunday. It was a sunny day, and once again the gigantic Luneta Park and grandstand were full to overflowing. As Teddy Locsin had anticipated, she called to the throngs assembled before her and those listening on Radio Veritas, to begin an immediate program of civil disobedience. The active breakdown of Marcos' power over the Philippines had begun.

Listeners were urged to boycott crony owned businesses, like the popular and modern Rustan's department stores. The call to boycott the Cojuangco-controlled San Miguel Corporation had more personal impact for most Filipinos. It produced both San Miguel beer and Coca-Cola. Even Cory had doubts that political fortitude would reduce the consumption of these two popular drinks. The announced boycott of seven major banks had a more immediate effect. Though he claimed that it was only a matter of coincidence, Central Bank Governor Jose "Jobo" Fernandez raised interest rates the following day. The economy was already in a shambles, and with foreign investors frightened by political instability the announcement would surely drive further capital away. Domestic savers heeded the boycott, and long lines formed at the crony banks, like the Coco Bank, as withdrawals were made. In an effort to slow the process, the bank instituted a new procedure in which the investor would have to come to the bank in person to make their withdrawals. To the bank's surprise they did.

This same day Habib met with both Marcos and Mrs. Aquino. In the separate meetings he kept his peace, and primarily listened. While Marcos later claimed "he was not here to render judgment on the conduct of the



election, nor to make any suggestion on the running of Philippine internal affairs", Habib did pass on President Reagan's concern over the election fraud.

The meeting with Cory was particularly cordial, and the two got along from the start. Teddy Locsin, who sat in the initial meeting to take notes and act as a witness, characterized their relationship as one which became progressively warmer. It was evident that Habib was not in Manila to reconcile the implacable foes, but to see things for himself. Just the same Mrs. Aquino assured him that she intended to prevail, the only solution being "a swift and orderly transition to the Aquino presidency that the Filipino people had chosen overwhelmingly at the polls." She had now clearly made the point that she considered herself the legally elected president, based on the NAMFREL count.

The following day the peso fell over 10% in value, and the boycott seemed to be having an effect. This same day, in a speech before Congress, Senator Jim Stasser (D-Tenn.) asked that all U.S. aid to the Philippines be halted in order to "withdraw U.S. taxpayer support for the corrupt, authoritarian regime" of Marcos. The White House quickly moved to issue a statement calling such an action premature. It was clear that they would not be embroiled in further characterizations until Habib had returned with his report.

Marcos was becoming less and less sure that his audacity would prevail once again. He made pointed references to what he claimed was "foreign intervention in the internal affairs of our people." More alarmingly, he began to cite bases for smashing the civil disobedience movement, calling it sedition. Fears for Cory's safety rose, and yet she strode forth into mammoth crowds, like one in Angeles City, outside of Clark Air Force Base.

She used the public forum to urge foreign governments not to recognize the Marcos presidency.

To date only one had. The Soviets. This in itself was seen as politically embarrassing for Marcos, an avowed anti-communist, and as a windfall for the U.S.. Even though the Administration had yet to publicly and officially comment on the presidency, the Soviet proclamation made U.S. silence look like a positive action. In the Congress matters were taking a more direct path. Representative Solarz announced that his Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs had voted 9-0 to halt direct U.S. aid to the government of Ferdinand Marcos, and to channel future humanitarian aid through the Roman Catholic Church and other private groups. Tellingly, four of the nine voting members were Republicans. Mrs. Aquino quickly put her stamp of approval on the action.

The real question shaping up was what could the U.S. do? There was no way of direct intervention, and it was universally agreed upon that intervention would be the worst thing the United States could do. No matter who won in the end, charges of neo-imperialism would kill any future role the U.S. might want to play. Commentator James J. Kirkpatrick made the point that even if the U.S. could somehow give the presidency to Mrs. Aquino she would be labeled an American puppet. This was a problem that the Filipinos had to solve. Either get rid of Marcos or live with him. The choice was a Filipino choice.

In the United States the mood of the Congress, the media, and the general public was now almost entirely anti-Marcos. Demonstrations led by exiled Filipinos outside Congress, the White House, and the Philippine Consulates around the country called for an end to all support of Marcos. The mood of the voting public was unmistakable, and politician after

politician rose to make speeches denouncing Marcos and praising Mrs. Aquino. The Philippines had not occupied the American consciousness to this degree since 1898.

On Saturday, February 22 the spark was struck which ignited People Power.

One of the men supposed to be closest to Marcos, Defense Minister Enrile, considered his options and deserted the ship of state. He was associated with the RAM--Reform the Armed Forces Movement--and early on Saturday he had received word that some 400 RAM officers associated with him had been ordered picked up and placed under military arrest. Further inquiry showed that General Ver, supposedly retired by Marcos after the election, and subordinate to the Defense Minister in any case, had ordered the arrests. This could only mean that the orders were actually at Marcos' instigation.

Enrile alleges that he had received information earlier in the week outlining a Marcos/Ver plan to round up the upper circle of Cory's advisors, including among others Rene Saguisag, Dante Santos, Joe Concepcion, Ting Paterno, Jaime Ongpin, Father Bernas and presumably Teddy Locsin, and have them killed. The deaths would be blamed on the communists and Marcos would reimplement martial law. Taking advantage of the chaos, Ver would have Enrile, Ramos and all of the RAM officers arrested and liquidated. Complete control of the military would again be assured.

It seemed, then, that this wild scenario might have validity, and Enrile felt he must move quickly. He telephoned Ramos at home with a straightforward question, "Will you support us, will you lead us?" The

answer was an unhesitating, "I'll be with you all the way!" They immediately left for Camp Aquinaldo.

The huge camp, home of the Army General Staff Headquarters as well as the Defense Ministry, sits across the multi-laned EDSA highway from Camp Crame, the Headquarters of the Philippine Constabulary and National Police. By 3:00 Enrile had moved into Camp Aquinaldo and through the leadership of one of the future popular heroes of the revolution, Colonel "Gringo" Honasan, had encircled both camps with armed troops loyal to the RAM. At 6:00 Enrile and Ramos called the press to assemble. The die was cast.

"I cannot in conscience support President Marcos, who thwarted the people's will in the last election", said Enrile. He went on to assert that in his home territory, the Cagayan Valley, Marcos had cheated by over 350,000 fake ballots. In a startling revelation he also admitted that the 1972 attempt on his life had been staged as a reason to implement martial law. For Ramos the matter was one of professional ethics, and he had never been demonstrated to be anything but a totally professional soldier. The move had been a hard one for him. "The armed forces have ceased to be the armed forces of the people. Soldiers are now the servants of powerful politicians", he said.

The RAM movement had already begun to take positive steps prior to the Enrile-Ramos split. Following the COMELEC computer operators walkout on Sunday February 9 it was RAM members and RAM vehicles which had spirited the 30 young women to safety from the COMELEC to Baclaran Cathedral. And of late they had taken to wearing a patch of the Philippine flag on their uniforms. The position it was to be worn was changed daily and

passed between members guardedly. This became the method of knowing who to trust.

At the end of the press conference Enrile and Ramos pledged their loyalty and support to Cory Aquino, hailing her the "duly appointed President of the Republic." In turn the future President called from Cebu to find out what was happening. Assuring her that they were all right Enrile asked her to pray for them.

They ended the press conference with an appeal to the "fair, the dedicated and people-oriented" in the military to come join them in their crusade. As it stood now they were a tiny force in an indefensible position. Help came from an unexpected source.

Cardinal Sin had heard the press conference and he went on Radio Veritas and appealed directly to the people of Manila. "Go to Camp Crame and Camp Aguinaldo. Lend your support to Enrile and Ramos and protect them. And bring them food, they have nothing to eat." In moments people were flying out of their houses with rice pots, sandwiches and soft drinks to take to the soldiers. And having arrived at EDSA, they stayed. The four day vigil had begun.

It took very little time for Marcos to react to the news that his Chief of Staff and Defense Minister had mutinied. He made several attempts to contact them, first asking that they come visit him at Malacanang, which they refused, and then speak to him over the telephone, which they also refused. Enrile did agree to speak to Ver. General Ver expressed surprise at the actions of the two defectors, and indicated that all of Enrile's fears had been misplaced. There had been no orders for arrest, he said. Come home, all is forgiven was the message. Enrile knew better, and ended the phone

call with a suggestion that they wait until the morning before making any moves.

Marcos had another trick up his sleeves. At around 11:00 that night he produced a young Captain, Ricardo Morales, who on camera read his "confession": "I am a participant in a plot to attack Malacanang Palace and to kill the President." Marcos went on personally to say that the plot had been uncovered in the nick of time, that both he and Imelda had been targeted for death, and that Enrile and Ramos had been integral to it. Unfortunately for Marcos there had simply been too many instances of stage-managed history, and people simply would not buy it. Instead the crowd at EDSA continued to grow throughout the night. Later, at about 1:00 a.m. Marcos changed his story and brought out yet another "assassin". He claimed to be one of five teams which had planned to kill the President and First Lady. Based on this new information Enrile and Ramos were innocent. Marcos urged them to "listen to reason and stop this stupidity." As yet no shots had been fired, and both sides were tense with anticipation. Each time that the President appeared on television he looked more tired and drawn. The drama was taking its toll on an already sick man.

Others within the government had begun to defect. The first was General Ramon Farolan, then Commissioner of Customs. (Now the Head of the Air Force). He was quickly followed by the Postmaster, General Roilo Golez, and Justice of the Supreme Court Nestor Alampay. Media personalities that had been associated with Marcos came over too. Film superstar Nora Aunor was the most famous, and she had to make two attempts at getting into Camp Crame, against a hostile crowd.

Within the opposition media the new star was radio personality June Keithley, an announcer on Radio Veritas. Having been in on the original

breaking of the Enrile-Ramos split she stayed on the air virtually throughout the next four days. To most of Manila she was the voice of the revolution.

On Sunday morning much of the holiday festivity that had blossomed Saturday night had faded. The people at EDSA were tired and uncomfortable, though still committed. Discomfort took a backseat to fear when the word was relayed that tanks were rolling their way. Undaunted, the people in the streets barricaded the way at the Ortigas Boulevard intersection using anything they could find, including their own automobiles. As the tanks (and armored personnel carriers) approached the intersection people kneeled and lay down in front of them. Flowers were offered to the soldiers and rosary beads and crucifixes were draped around the gun barrels. The tanks stopped. After tense moments of confrontation the Marine Tank Commander ordered his column through a brick wall and into a grassy field. As they started to turn away the immense crowd began chanting in one voice to the Marines, "WE LOVE YOU, WE LOVE YOU, WE LOVE YOU!" No shots had been fired, no lives lost.

In talking to people who were there over that fateful weekend one theme comes up again and again. The EDSA revolution was not as much a political experience as it was a religious one. There were those that claimed to feel the presence of God. But even those less mystically inclined will affirm that the spirit was alive within the crowd, and certainly the Church was everywhere. Rosaries were said continually, and the priests explained the mysteries to the surrounding crowd. Hundreds of nuns mingled throughout the crowd, and talked to the young soldiers, both rebel and undecided. Images of the Christ child and various saints appeared in the military compound at easily seen vantage points. At the center of the area, on Camp Crame across the gate from Camp Aguinaldo, a new church is

already in the progress of being built, on ground consecrated during the revolution--Our Lady of EDSA.

On Monday emotions were kept on a tight string. Malacanang had ordered two jet aircraft to maintain a tight orbit over the area and they did so, making repeated low passes over the camps. Unknown at the time to the pilots, even if they had been ordered to strafe the crowd or the military camps they would have been unable to. The enlisted ordnancemen had spiked their guns prior to takeoff.

This same day the Navy and most of the Air Force defected, and the balance of the military was on the rebel side. A tense moment occurred when an abortive teargas attack was launched simultaneously with the arrival of helicopter gunships overhead. But the wind shifted miraculously, blowing the gas back into the attacker's faces, and the helicopter crews flew low and flashed the LABAN sign. They too had turned.

The bleakest moments of the revolution came when it was discovered that early reports that Marcos had left were in error. Wild jubilation had swept the crowd, Ramos leaping into the air at his headquarters in Camp Crame. June Keithley had announced the good news over RV and was crushed when she had to get back on the radio and retract it. The disappointment simply reinforced the EDSA crowds resolve. They would stick it out to the end, whatever that might be.

A humorous incident occurred when the second group of Armored Personnel Carriers lumbered up to EDSA. One young man drove his Volkswagen alongside them as they approached, and before they reached the crowd he swerved in front of the approaching column and formed a barricade. The APCs, with their young Marine crews, stopped, and the crowd gathered. Again the women approached and pleaded with the soldiers to



leave them in peace. Again the crucifixes were draped over the .50 calibre machine gun barrels, and again the Marines, combat hardened from NPA and MNLF campaigns, went to turn away. This time, however, there was a problem. The Volkswagon had gotten a flat tire from debris on the road. The tough Marines dismounted, helped the young man change his tire and then drove away.

Throughout the weekend the President had had a monopoly on television. Channel Four was being used as his personal forum, and live filming from Malacanang showed the grandchildren cavorting as Marcos and his generals conferred on the next course of action. At eight o'clock Monday morning fighting broke out at the television station between rebel and loyalist troops. When the people heard they ran towards the fighting, and by one o'clock women volunteers had talked the remaining loyalist troops out of their holdout positions. At 8:45, in the middle of another Marcos "plot" confession, the station went off the air. Within hours the station was again transmitting, but the hated Marcos spokesmen were gone, and in their place was the New Channel Four team. June Keithley now had some competition.

A rebel F-76 made an attack on the Palace grounds, firing six rockets. It was following this attack, which deliberately avoided firing on the Palace itself, that Marcos declared that he and his family were "cowering in fear." All about the city Filipinos were coming to the conclusion that their 20 year strongman, guerilla fighter, and scourge of communism was actually a coward, that Cory had been right all along. As this last measure of respect was stripped away Marcos lost his hold over the Philippines. The Filipinos had exorcised their own devil.

In Washington it was becoming evident that a public statement had to be made, that the situation in Manila must be acknowledged. Ambassador Habib met with President Reagan, Caspar Weinberger, the Deputy Director of the CIA, and Undersecretary of State Mike Armacost. Habib's message to the President was remarkably similar to that given him days before by Dr. Buss:

- 1) Marcos was through.
- 2) Anything Marcos did could only worsen the situation.
- 3) The U.S. should act to prevent the use of force at EDSA.

President Reagan demanded that Marcos receive better treatment from the U.S. than had the Shah of Iran.

The message was passed to Marcos from Mike Armacost via Labor Minister Blas Ople, in Washington with Alex Melchor in an effort to stabilize the Marcos position with the U.S. government. Ople phoned the gist of the message to Marcos. He was not happy. His response was to issue an ultimatum to the rebels. Give up now, or he would lead the troops routing them out himself. Ver begged him to attack, saying that he still had a massive firepower advantage. But Marcos refused, to everyone's surprise. Later he was to explain that he was afraid that all of family would be killed in the counterattack that would surely follow. His lack of action was the most decent action of all. Instead he attempted to rely on his own brand of people power. He asked all of his supporters to come to Malacanang, and bring their "legally owned" weapons. This was later amended to include illegal weapons as well. Finally the offer was made to supply weapons. A pitifully small group appeared.

Early on Tuesday morning Marcos placed a call to Senator Paul Laxalt, whom he considered a friendly witness, and one that had the President's ear. He asked Laxalt if the President would support a sharing of power until he

stepped down in 1987. The earlier Reagan statement had read, "Attempts to prolong the life of the present regime by violence are futile. A solution to this crisis can only be achieved through a peaceful transition to a new government." Laxalt would not speak for the President. He told the old dictator that he would confer with President Reagan and call him back. After conferring with the President and Secretary of State George Shultz he called back to Malacanang, saying that the President could not advise him what to do. Marcos then inquired, "Senator, what do you think? Should I step down?" Laxalt's answer was one of the most famous of the revolution. "Mr. President, I'm not bound by diplomatic restraint. I'm talking only for myself. I think you should cut and cut cleanly. The time has come." The phone went dead for several minutes. Finally Laxalt said, "Mr. President, are you still there?" Marcos answered in a small voice. "Yes, I'm still here. I am so very, very disappointed."<sup>1</sup> It really was all over.

Knowing that there was no recourse other than leaving, Imelda and Ferdinand still went ahead with their inauguration ceremony. From the balcony of the Palace they tried to put on brave faces, and even sang a duet as in their campaigning days of past. But it was no use. All around Malacanang, in the university district, preparations were being made for a siege of the Palace. Burning tires sent plumes of noxious smoke in the air, and barricades were up everywhere in case the tanks came again.

Following the inauguration ceremony Marcos made one last attempt to hold on. He telephoned Enrile with an offer that he put together a provisional government, with Marcos as "honorary" president until 1987. Enrile refused to be bought, and told Marcos that he and Ramos had already

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<sup>1</sup>Nick Joaquin, The Quartet of the Tiger Moon, (Manila: Book Stop, Inc., 1986).

declared themselves in support of Mrs. Aquino. Marcos urged him to discuss the matter with Mrs. Aquino, but again Enrile, who had served Marcos for 21 years, was aware of his tricks. He would not be led into the kind of suspicion-arousing inquiry that Marcos wanted. Instead he told Marcos that he and his family would not be harmed.

Cory came out of sanctuary on Tuesday morning to be sworn in herself. As of 3:00 a.m. they were frantically attempting to organize the ceremony. Cardinal Sin was not available to give the invocation and Bishop Federico (Just call me Freddie...) Escaler was phoned. He had been in Manila on a visit from Mindanao when the revolution started. "But I don't have a habit", he explained to Father Bernas. "We'll look for a Jesuit habit in the house", replied Bernas. The ceremony was held at the Sampaguita Room of the Club Filipino in Greenhills. As usual everyone wore yellow, and it was a happy, effervescent crowd that cheered her as she took the oath of office. The bible resting under her left hand was held by Ninoy's mother, Aurora, and she took her first salute from Chief of Staff of the New Armed Forces of the Philippines, General Ramos.

At Malacanang arrangements were being made with Ambassador Bosworth and the embassy staff to airlift Marcos and his contingent out of Manila, to Clark Air Force Base, and out of the country. Contrary to Marcos' claims that the U.S. had "kidnapped" him out of his own country, he knew where he was headed every step of the way. In a press conference at USIS Cebu, on May 19, Ambassador Bosworth stated for the record that Marcos had been totally informed throughout the move. In fact the departure was carefully choreographed between Marcos, the Aquino people, and the U.S. Embassy. There was never any doubt. Marcos, his family, and some 90 hangers-on left Clark at 5:12 a.m. Wednesday, February 26th.

The treasure they left behind in the palace was now public property. The treasure they took with them was to be the subject of long law suits on behalf of the Filipino people. In a moment prior to the departure Marcos was heard by one of our embassy personnel to say to Imelda, "This is all your fault!" His place in history was assured, but it was nothing to be proud of.

A festival was underway in the streets of Manila. The impossible had happened, the dreamed was achieved. The future was now open to improvement. They were saddled with a huge debt, and an economy on tottering legs. But as Teddy Locsin had observed weeks before, in hoping that they could pull the election off, if successful, the Filipino people would finally have no one else to blame, and would have to put up or shut up.

The ultimate challenge of Filipino nationalism had arrived.

The future was theirs to shape.

## VIII. EPILOGUE

On May 24, 1986 we returned to Manila. The purpose of the trip was to assess how the new government was faring, what the prospects for the economy were, and most importantly to personally gauge the temperament of the people.

Some of the people we had interviewed at election time were now gone. Judge Donato was in the States, General Barrangan fled with Marcos. Others in the KBL camp were finding their way around a new social and political order. Ditos has found himself the subject of a hold order, and while presently "in between positions" is attempting to set up a foundation for development assistance and simultaneously expedite the case between Vincente Chuidian and the new government. Prud Europa is still in Manila, not working, but looking for a home within journalism, his pre-Marcos avocation.

Teddy Locsin remains close to Cory. As the Minister of Information he immediately alienated much of the press with his straight talk and refusal to play the old boy network. There is little doubt that he is the most sniped at Cabinet member, but by and large the complaints are petty, and only make the news because he is in daily contact with the media. By the time this is published he should have accomplished his goal of abolishing the Ministry of Information with it's 4000+ employees. This legacy of Marcos' news manipulation will be replaced with a small Office of the Presidential Press Secretary. Teddy, who remains one of Cory's closest advisors, anticipates a position as her Chief of Staff. His real desire is to get back into active law practice; he is a partner in a firm just opening it's doors. Since working in the campaign Teddy has developed an interest in the NPA. He sees a role for

himself as an advisor to the President on the ongoing insurgency. The military may have something to say about that.

Inday Arcenas, Doy's niece, is working in the Vice President's office. She is not a regular employee, is not drawing salary, and tries very hard to reduce the family image in the office. There is little doubt, however, that she has carte blanche to crack the whip when necessary. Her present task is to organize the office, a formidable task as it is starting up from scratch. She is anticipating a trip to the United States in which she hopes to speak to both Filipino-American and foreign affairs interest groups. Like Ditos she is working on a foundation which will assist development for the very poor and those starting up businesses.

The immediately noticeable change in Manila this second trip was its cleanliness. Locals claimed not to see it, but it was obvious to me that the streets and alleys were much cleaner, swept and picked up. And not just Roxas Boulevard. Wherever we went it was apparent. Windows and shop fronts seemed cleaner as well. The difference is pride. Pride in being Filipino. Talk to anyone and you get the same impression. "We did it. We removed the boot from our necks, and no one helped us." This is a very potent psychological force which can make a difference.

There are gigantic problems to be overcome. They fall into four major categories: economic, political, the insurgency/Armed Forces, and societal. They are interrelated, yet have individual requirements, and somewhat individual agendas.

## A. THE ECONOMY

There is nothing more incumbent on the new President than improving the economy. In a country where the average daily wage is less than US

\$3.00, jobs and pesos in circulation are vital. The massive US\$28 billion foreign debt is a millstone around Cory's neck, yet she has shied away from talk of repudiating the debt. Almost US\$1 billion in foreign aid has been pledged, but relatively little has been actually received as yet. Much of the delay has been a failure of the Manila government to put forth either proposals or requests. While a frustrated Doy Laurel stated to me "we're getting a lot of sympathy, but we need some tea!" he was countered by an equally frustrated Felix Maramba, Jr. Felix explained how he had arranged to receive over 1/3 of the total 1987 wheat requirements of Filipino food manufacturers through U.S. assistance. There was P\$1 billion in U.S. PL 480 assistance available, it only needed to be asked for. Having ascertained this from the USAID people at the U.S. Embassy, Felix approached Minister of Finance Jimmy Ongpin, Minister of Agriculture Mitra, and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Minister Winnie Monsod. All that was required was a letter on government stationery requesting release of the funds. Then bids would be opened for wheat suppliers in the United States. Felix, representing the Miller's Association, would go the Washington for the bid opening, and the ships could roll. After a month of waiting he still had no letter, and no commitment. When he continued to contact the Ministers he finally got a response from Assistant Minister of Finance Earnest Leung. The hitch was that Leung wanted the National Food Authority to act as the middle man. Felix balked. His previous attempts to deal with the bureaucracy had been less than ideal, and the transaction was ready to be concluded. A new player would only complicate and slow the process. The deal is still in limbo, and the wheat remains in the United States. Yet Cabinet level Ministers continue to complain in public about the lack of received aid.



At least one country, Australia, is taking a very firm stand with their aid. After a series of meetings with key government officials, capped by a meeting with President Aquino, Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke announced that the aid would be increased by A\$9 million for the year, up to A\$25 million. He added, however, that after a two week visit by the Australian Aid Mission it had been decided to implement the aid in three phases. The first phase would introduce community assistance, but primarily centers on Australia providing key commodities. Phase two would see a decrease of commodity assistance, and phase three would be fully implemented community assistance. Hawke spoke of the warm and cordial relations that he and Mrs. Aquino had shared, but Cory has made no secret of her desire that foreign governments trust the new Aquino government to properly administer aid. Clearly, a high priority for the government is going to be specific and realistic programs to utilize aid that has been promised. In many cases it will first be necessary to eliminate interagency rivalry.

A positive economic note has been sounded in small business. The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry has established a Foundation for Economic Development. The Foundation will administer the projects that have been accepted by the Philippine Business Conference. Examples of projects are:

- strawberry processing
- gold small scale mining
- goat raising
- mushroom production
- prawn production
- furnace type kiln dryer
- peanut growing and processing
- fabrication of farm machinery

There are many others, but the direction of the effort should be evident. Rather than the large, government sponsored and administered development projects of the past, this is an effort to build the poor into self-sufficient

middle class members. The intent is to develop new products for the Philippines, and first and foremost to put people to work. The Foundation will seek equity for the projects from international donors, as well as grants from other private sources.

The leader in all of this industry is Vic Lim, a banker, investment consultant, Chairman of the Board of two textile firms, and member of the PCCI. Lim is convinced that the restoration of the economy cannot wait for the government, but must be led by private industry. To that end he is enroute Washington to talk directly with USAID executives. He brings with him specific proposals, and moderate budget requests. I would rate his potential for success as very high.

The most alarming measurement of the economic future has been the poor rate of investment in the country. American investors have taken a bad rap in Philippine cities for their hesitancy to invest, but as Ambassador Bosworth has pointed out, the Filipino investor has yet to make a move as well. At a press conference in Cebu on May 19, 1986 he was asked, "We would like to know from you, Sir, as to the perception, perhaps, of the American investors in helping reawaken the sluggish business activity in the Philippines." He answered, "Well, my sense is that the American business community is showing evidence of some reawakening of interest in the Philippines. There has been very little investment here over the last couple of years, either from American investors or other foreign investors, or I might add, from Filipino investors. And we now find in Manila in particular that we are receiving three or four inquiries a day from American companies who are now beginning to come to the Philippines again to look at the situation. I think it's too early to say that there is a new surge of actual investment. I think that's probably at least a few months in the future.

I would also say that I don't think anyone should expect that American investment or foreign investment in general is going to lead this economic recovery. It can help; but the impetus for economic recovery in the Philippines, in my judgment, is going to have to come from Filipino investors. It will only be when foreign investors see evidence that domestic investors have regained confidence and are beginning to put money into the economy again that you will see some significant interest on the part of foreign investors including Americans."

Secretary of State George Shultz urged American businessmen to reconsider the Philippines early in June. "I am bullish on the Philippines", he declared. "I believe that the American investors who come in early and for the long haul will reap large benefits", he told the New York Foreign Policy Association. Continuing, Shultz told the audience, "If stability and development in the Philippines are to be attained, however, the American private sector must get off the dime and look aggressively at investment opportunities. In light of the Philippines' abundant human and natural resources, there is no reason why the Filipinos cannot now enjoy the same economic success achieved by many of their Asian neighbors."

It is too early to tell whether endorsements like this will increase the flow of capital into the country, but they should.

Then there is the subject of recovery of the ill-gotten wealth. The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) has made substantial inroads in identifying, sequestering, and recovering monies accrued during the Marcos years by cronies, but there must come a time when the investigation will be over. Chairman Jovito Salonga's Executive Director, Colonel (retired) Feliciano Cruz, Jr., indicated to me that he expected the Commission to be active for 1-1 1/2 years. They had initially estimated that

the monies under consideration were in the range of 2-3 billion pesos domestically, and 1-2 billion dollars abroad. They have since revised their figures upwards to 10-15 billion pesos at home and up to 10 billion dollars abroad. To date they have recovered 1.5 billion pesos which has been turned back to the government. Another 4-6 billion pesos in property has been sequestered and is awaiting the action of the courts.

Colonel Cruz put the recovery process in perspective by pointing out that total government expenditures for the year before had been 95 billion pesos. If they continue to recover significant amounts it will have a substantial impact on the ability of the government to continue services. Although there is little real hope that enough will be recovered to affect the foreign debt, operating capital is another story. Perhaps the best reason for the PCGG effort is its deterrent value. If basic changes are going to be made in the way Philippine business is conducted it will take a carrot and stick approach. This is the stick.

Developmental assistance is another side to the economic coin. One school of thought holds that increased business and jobs will bring Filipinos out of their poverty. Another claims that developmental assistance is necessary to break the longstanding chains that have bound a large segment of the society to poverty. Of the latter, probably no one is doing better work than the Catholic Church.

One very committed individual is Father Rollie Dizon, a Lasalle Brother. He ran the Operation Quick Count at NAMFREL Headquarters at his school, and has now shifted back to his primary emphasis on development through education. He and Sister Luz, the President of Assumption College, explained many of their programs to me. One is modification of existing curricula. They have asked the 1222 parochial schools under their purview

to carve niches out of the curricula for students to address ways of making the country's future better. The new course segments stress economic and developmental factors. By making time for students to verbalize their concerns and hopes for the new political environment they hope to foster a greater awareness and responsibility in youth.

The Assumption alumnae and their husbands have succeeded in building a satellite school in San Simon, Pampangas. In this primarily rural area, the school serves as a "magnet" for local farmers, teaching the adults as well as the children. The adults learn agriculture and business techniques. A total of 350 families take advantage of this community support. Sister Luz hopes that by educating the farmers they can help make any future land reform a success. In the past farmers given land they had previously been tenanted to quickly ended up back in debt to a landlord. Within the new system the community, rallying about the school, has formed a cooperative and now owns its support facilities--silos, warehouses, and tools. Additionally, this school is acting as a training center for farmers from other depressed rural regions. As feasible, new satellite schools will be built.

A telling comment that Father Dizon made is that prior to the current crisis there was a tendency for the Catholic schools to "stay within their own walls". Now they are agreed that the need within the community as a whole is too large, and they are committed to helping. Aside from projects initiated by the Catholic Educational Association Philippines there are new programs like the Service Contract Scheme. In this, Catholic schools share their facilities with less fortunate public schools. The goal has become much more nationally, much less parochially aimed.

The hitherto silent middle and upper middle class has come out of the walls of their posh Manila residential compounds and really looked around

at their country. The thousands of women of such upbringing who united in People Power will not all go back to mah jongg and afternoon cocktails at the Polo Club. They have once seized political power, wrought a tremendous change, and seen their dreams become reality. Now the dream is for a prosperous and economically dignified Philippines. They feel as if it is within their grasp to make positive changes in that too.

Two women I met started a handicrafts export business in one of their houses. The basketry that they now export around the world supports 150 families. They are committed to remitting a fair portion of the profit back to the artisans, and are anticipating growth. Others were involved in school lunch programs in the slums, taking turns cooking for children that otherwise wouldn't eat. It is this level of commitment that will make a difference in the end, if only the numbers of the committed continue to increase.

## B. POLITICS

In less than a hundred days Cory has found herself in the midst of world-class political maneuvering, intrigue, and dissention. She faces the fractures of old and new parties, the realigning of political forces, Ministerial prima donnas, allegations of Marcos-era hidden wealth within her cabinet, a hostile and leftist young press corps, and a military hierarchy leary of her intentions toward the insurgency and their role in combatting it.

Her problems with the Cabinet run the gamut. Teddy Locsin is the favorite target of the press; Minister of Local Government Aquilino Pimentel has been roundly criticized for his appointments of "officers in charge" to replace Marcos-era local officials. Residents point to some OIC's who allegedly failed in election attempts in their areas two or three times, but

who are now in leadership positions by virtue of appointment. Minister of Labor Sanchez is so blatantly pro-labor that the entire business community is up in arms. According to a source close to the President, at one point she told Sanchez just to "shut up" in public. Minister of Finance Jaime Ongpin, a close advisor during the campaign, has come under fire as it has become known that a majority owner of his Benguet Corporation was Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, Imelda Marcos' brother. Ongpin claimed not to have known this, but that has largely been met with skepticism. A second matter of controversy in Ongpin's case has been his insistence that Central Bank Governor Jobo Fernandez remain in his position. Many see the Marcos appointee's position at odds with the aims of the new government.

The most dramatic potential split in the cabinet would be between the President and her millionaire Defense Minister, Johnny Enrile. His key role in the revolution made his remaining in office a certitude, and his avowed allegiance to Mrs. Aquino rang true during the four fateful days in February. Now, however, there is less certainty that he will be willing to remain in the backseat to her for the next six years.

Recently, on the American news show, West 57th, he was asked what would happen if Mrs. Aquino were to ask him to leave the government. He must have raised eyebrows in Manila when he answered, "She'll have to talk to my boys."

The answer would seem to indicate that he feels the military backs him. It is probable that many of the officers that were close to him personally in the RAM movement are loyal, but it is far less certain that the majority of troops would desert their new, and popularly chosen president. The public expression of People Power which won the military over will not be soon forgotten. I have been told by a competent source that when the

Enrile-Ramos defection occurred, and negotiations with the Aquino faction were made, it was agreed upon that Enrile would serve the new president if she met two conditions. First she was to leave uninvestigated his personal wealth and it's sources, and second, human rights violations that occurred in the military under his leadership were to be quietly forgotten. As the man who personally determined when and for how long she and her family could visit Ninoy in prison, he no doubt has few illusions of her admiration for him. It remains to be seen if he has reassessed her strength. My guess is that she will continue to consolidate power based on her popular appeal and he will be forced to seek a more definitive political role through election. The first step in achieving that will likely be the reconsolidation of the Nationalista Party (NP).

The subject of political parties is very much alive in the Philippines today. The UNIDO coalition is falling apart without the need for unity as in pre-election days, and Pimentel is leaning away from the Aquino wing of the PDP-LABAN, threatening it's fracture. The KBL is a shadow of it's old self. In a meeting with members of the KBL executive committee, ex-Marcos Presidential Assistant Joaquin Venus related how Marcos had recently telephoned the KBL executive meeting in Baguio to speak to principals of the party. In the conversation he told ex-Speaker of the National Assembly Yniguez, Arturo Tolentino and Ronnie Zamora to "keep the fight up for a return of democracy to the Philippines." Later the group related it's new platform--the return of the rule of law. Venus related how his house had been searched on February 28, presumably for hidden wealth. "I was one of the first to suffer violation of human rights under this government", he said. If they hadn't been so serious the conversation would have been laughable.



These men, who are certainly among the most committed to the "old" KBL, mused over the breakup of their own party. They bemoaned the departure of Blas Ople and his new Partido Nationalista ng Pilipinas (PNP) as well as members which left the ranks to form the Independent KBL (IKBL). Even these new parties are having problems. When Mrs. Aquino announced the appointees for the Constitutional Commission (Con-Com), she left five spots open for "the opposition". Marcos made one of his daily phone calls from exile in Hawaii to Ople, instructing him to boycott the Commission. When Ople refused, 11 members of the PNP left to join the NP.

In the Liberal Party the Salonga and Kalaw wings have begun an effort to mend their fences. It appears that they will be able to coalesce their members into a unified party.

There is more intrigue within the Nationalista Party. As UNIDO loses strength it looks as if Doy Laurel is headed to a takeover bid of the NP, taking most of UNIDO with him. In an opposing move Johnny Enrile is aligning himself with Former Deputy Minister Renato Cayetano, nominal head of the NP as it is now structured. Rumors are thick that Enrile looks toward eventual leadership of the NP, with himself as it's next Presidential candidate. If that is the case there will be a tremendous power struggle between him and Doy. During the KBL discussion former Governor Lorenzo Teves was asked if they could see themselves as supporters of Doy Laurel. His comment was, "We'll see--live and let live!" The variations are endless.

The key to these scenarios is probably the Con-Com's decision on the type of government that will be adopted. If the present parliamentary, unicameral system is maintained there will doubtless be a plethora of parties. But if the U.S. style, bicameral system is returned to, the parties will

probably merge into two major forces. If this occurs the parties will likely be the Liberal and Nationalista.

### C. THE INSURGENCY/NEW ARMED FORCES

The new government and the New Armed Forces of the Philippines are dancing a cautious dance with each other. The insurgency has not gone away and the need for a strong military is evident. This need is balanced in Cory's view by the military's poor human rights record, corruption, and to some degree, her memories of Ninoy's years languishing in military camps. The surprise defection of Enrile and Ramos to her side at the crucial moment produced the proverbial strange bedfellows. Since then she has warmed to the military. An insider described her as "loving hierarchy--the generals and the bishops are her favorites." Indeed, she has been at home in attending military functions, such as the graduation of a recent class at the Philippine Military Academy. While she proudly trooped the line, and saluted snappily, she also reminded the cadets in her address that it had been a soldier that had fired a bullet into her husband's head.

The greatest rift between Aquino and her generals has been over the handling of the insurgency. She first exposed herself to their ire by seeking advice from civilians, when clearly the military considered themselves to be the experts on the NPA. Next she disregarded the advice of the military leadership in the release of political prisoners. It was one of her campaign promises, and she was urged by close advisors Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo and Press Spokesman Rene Saguisag (both human rights lawyers) to expedite the releases. The military wanted her to wait and reconsider the cases of known communists and NPA sympathizers. In the end, she followed

her own conscience and released all, including Jose Maria Sison, the old head of the Communist Party, and Commander Dante, a reputed NPA leader.

While the military maintains that this makes it difficult to keep the front line troops motivated (for every one we catch, she releases one...), the President may have been way ahead of them. During the years that Sison and Dante have been in prison the communist leadership has changed. With the old leaders free the struggle for power within the party is all the more vigorous. It has developed serious internal rifts. By removing strong central leadership Cory may well force the NPA into an even greater regional orientation than it now has, thus further defusing it's power.

A more pressing problem is that of NPA reconciliation/surrenderrees. The crux of her solution to the insurgency was that by removing Marcos the dictator, and the corruption that he engendered, the economy would improve. As these two things occurred many of what have been labelled NPA would voluntarily come out of the hills. She acknowledged that the hardcore would require a military solution, but wanted to reduce military action until her program had an opportunity to work. The lack of a formal ceasefire led to increased military casualties, and the military leadership was understandably upset. Shortly after the Aquino government had begun talk of reconciliation the NPA in northern Luzon ambushed a convoy in which press members were riding. The deaths that resulted seem to have hardened a previously middle-of-the-road press into a firmer get-tough-with-the-NPA attitude.

The administration is working on schemes to devote unused lands to cooperative agricultural land reform for surrenderrees. In addition to land, they would receive protection from NPA reprisals as well as farm training. The benefit of such a program is that it would provide a positive reaction to

the insurgency while blunting criticism of the poor efforts towards land reform.

A key question from the start of the Aquino movement has been her ability to make the military decisions that will be needed. The "softness" with which Marcos attempted to label President Aquino does not appear to have been accurate. One aide characterized her as "the perfect fascist--if she had her way it would be she, the generals and the bishops running the country!" There is every reason to believe that she will make the hard decisions when the time comes. For now she will press forward with her plans to talk with the CPP/NPA. Insiders stress that she has a deep seated hatred of communists and communism, and is well aware of the threat that they pose to the Philippines.

The United States position will have to remain fluid. While a certain level of military assistance will always be useful, it is questionable how much is at the present time. The NAFP--emphasis on the "New"--has stated a desire for assistance in replacing the basics--uniforms, canteens, boots, and vehicle spare parts. Economically, it will probably be in their best interests if such requirements are eventually locally produced. However, in the near term these are exactly the types of non-lethal assistance which will easily win the approval of congress.

One measure of the change in the NAFP has been their move out of Manila. Under President Marcos a large proportion of the troops and their generals were located in and around Manila. Tanks and support vehicles were likewise close to Malacanang. Since the revolution Chief of Staff Ramos has ordered most of them out into the countryside where they belong. The Marines, for example, are primarily west of Davao, in Cotabato. This signals a greater interest by the military in meeting the insurgency at it's source.

and confidence that the President does not require protection from the people she represents.

In bolstering their image, the military has begun greater efforts at civic action. This has already produced increased morale in the NAFP, and a much improved reception by the general population. There are two major problems with the program. First, it will require some determined leadership reform to ensure that the supplies--primarily medical--are not diverted to the black market. Secondly, there has already been interference from newly appointed members of government. Minister of Agriculture Ramon Mitra, for example, has attempted to direct the form that such action takes. The military will require freedom in reasserting itself as a medium for positive change. The other branches of government, while exerting the civilian control over the armed forces that is mandatory in a democracy, must allow them room to improve, function, and grow.

#### D. SOCIETY

Filipino nationalists have traditionally recognized the inroads that colonial powers have made on their culture. The roots of the contemporary Filipino are taken primarily from the Malay, Chinese, Indio (indigenous), Spanish, and American influences on the islands. Each has left a legacy, and each has been the subject of critical analysis, the Spanish and Americans receiving the brunt of the criticism. Centuries of travelers to this Pacific crossroads have left their mark on the Philippines. The society shares the negatives that colonialism brought with the positive social factors of a wide gene pool, a lack of serious racial tension, and strong religious and family commitments.

There are popular notions, voiced even within Manila, that the Filipinos are unlikely to ever achieve the efficiency and productivity of the Japanese, Koreans, or Americans, that they are victims of "tropical paralysis". If the Democratic Revolution has proven anything, it is the falsehood of such a belief. The modern and bustling finance center in Makati can be a blueprint for the future. Agriculture can flourish in this resource rich land. Person after person pointed out that the country may be poor now, but everyone can eat. With changes to the way that business is done many more can climb the economic ladder.

A more serious charge might be that Filipinos are culturally conditioned towards acceptance of a government that is based on favoritism, nepotism, corruption, and autocratic control. The roots of this cultural inheritance reach well before the coming of Ferdinand Marcos. The real challenge to the Aquino administration is to provide government that is representative of the needs of all Filipinos, and to ignite latent skills and talents into economically recognizable productivity. Beyond the susceptibility towards governmental corruption and favoritism, there are twenty years of paternalism to overcome. The corner is just beginning to be turned.

## E. CONCLUSION

As I review the campaign, the election, and the revolution, I am struck by the extremes in contrast that emerged. The freshness of Cory Aquino as she spoke to hundreds of thousands and the grimness of a defeated Marcos imprisoned in Malacanang during the last week. The youthful exuberance of the NAMFREL volunteers and the uncomprehending other-worldliness of the

KBL executives. The empty, dirty KBL national election headquarters and the frenetic bustle of the earnest Aquino volunteers.

The imposing contemporary edifice of the Philippine Cultural Center across the street from cardboard and plywood hovels barely four feet wide. The faces of child street beggars being coached in the morning by the old matriarch in rags and the earnest, serious concentration of a Forbes Park youngster demonstrating her newest computer achievements. An entire bank floor of stuffed trophy animals, and the barefoot salesman in Rizal park selling sparrows in tiny baskets for a few pesos each. Finally, the sight I shall never forget: the gleaming black Mercedes limosine, with its tinted windows and anonymity, honking in indignation at the four laughing children taking a bath in a particularly deep pothole, their mother holding the towel at the side of the road.

I do not mean to imply that the extremes between the haves and the have-nots were in any way exclusively Filipino. They were not. There are said to be 50,000 homeless in New York City alone. But the contrast is more poignant, more shocking, during a period of time in which the government is boldly and blatantly selling itself as the answer to the country's problems, and ignoring it's responsibility as the reason. An outsider was forced to ask himself, how long will the people allow this to continue? When will the lies become too shallow, and the logic too convoluted for even the uneducated to accept? Why will they not rise up to protect the children?

The answers came with a rapidity that no one could have expected.

Those that faced down tanks can face down corruption. The many who said enough! to the few can be the watchdogs of the new society. And the Philippines can again be the Pearl of the Orient.

The dream is alive, the triumph can be theirs.

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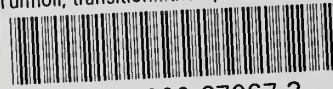
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